

GASCONS IN ITALY, 1494-1515:

THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE MONARCHY AND ITS ARMY

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DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I declare that this thesis has been composed by
myself and that the work is entirely my own.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.N.	Archives nationales (Paris).
B.N.	Bibliothèque nationale (Paris): manuscripts.
B.P.	Archives départementales des Pyrénées-Atlantiques.
A.S.I.	Archivio Storico Italiano.
B.E.C.	Bibliothèque de l'Ecole de chartes.
D.I.	Collection de documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de France.
S.H.F.	Société de l'histoire de France.
Anselme	Anselme, <u>Histoire générale et chronologique...</u>
Auton	Jean d'Auton, <u>Chroniques de Louis XII</u>
<u>Diarii</u>	Marino Sanuto, <u>Diarii</u>
<u>G.R.</u>	G. Dupont-Ferrier, <u>Gallia regia...</u>
<u>Titres de Bourbon</u>	M. Huillard-Bréholles and A. Lecoy de la Marche, <u>Titres de la maison ducale de Bourbon.</u>

ABSTRACT

The thesis begins by exploring in the first chapter the process of increasing dependence of the French nobility upon royal patronage during the later fifteenth century. The implications of this growing reliance upon royal favour are assessed in the second chapter, in terms of the development of the standing army, and we are introduced to three Gascon companies to estimate the rival claims of King and captain to their proprietorship. The chapter continues by examining some of the characteristics of the gendarmerie, and ends by outlining the importance of service in Italy in the careers of our sample units and its effects on their composition. These three specimen companies form the basis of a study in chapters three and four of the opportunities for gain and promotion and the perils of death, wounding and capture afforded by Italian service.

In chapter five the moral quality of the gendarmerie is investigated and an assessment made of the degree to which the Crown could rely upon the good conduct of its servants in Italy. The sixth chapter continues by exploring the relations of French soldiers with Italians and other foreigners across the Alps and examining the impression made upon the French by contact with the peninsula. The thesis concludes with descriptions of the careers of two Gascons who attained supreme command in Italy, with particular reference to their relations with the King and the impact of these upon their conduct of affairs. An appendix provides brief biographies of four other Gascon captains with important Italian careers.

CHAPTER ONETHE NOBILITY IN ROYAL SERVICE

Historians have identified an extraordinary change in the relations between the French Crown and aristocracy during the hundred years or so straddling 1500.

A nobility frequently in revolt was tamed, and trained to assume the role of chief executor of the royal will, both at home and in foreign affairs. And the prime agent of this change in French politics has been seen as the power of the King's purse. A British historian, writing at the turn of the century, sketched this view concisely:

"Princes and minor nobles alike were gradually brought into the King's obedience by the King's pay," he maintained; "while the poor gentlemen entered the King's service as guards, as men-at-arms, or even as archers, the great princes drew the King's pensions; or aspired to the lucrative captainship of a body of Ordonnances. If of sufficient dignity and influence they might hope for the still more valuable post of governor in some province. When they had once learnt to rely on the mercenary's stipend, they could not easily bring themselves to exchange it for the old, honourable, though lawless independence. Gradually the provincial nobility became dependent on the Court, and in large measure resident there. This process begins in early times, but advances more rapidly under

Charles VII and his successors, and is nearly completed under Francis I¹."

The attraction of royal money was strengthened by the financial embarrassment of the landed class. By the 1450s the economic pinch was becoming more acute: rents were decreasing in real terms as the landowner, left with fewer tenants after the catastrophes of the previous hundred years, had to cope with inflation, fuelled by rising demand and currency debasement, on a fixed income. More arbitrary sources of revenue dried up with the decline in judicial rights, and the prohibition of taxes on free tenants in 1439.² By the time our period opens, four decades had passed since the last ravages of the war with England, during which time the damage to property caused by the marauding armies was slowly repaired. Yet the expulsion of the English had hardly ushered in four decades of peace. Warfare was continual, even if not as generally calamitous as before, and property suffered: in 1487, for example, the town of Le Nouvion, which belonged to Louis d'Armagnac, comte de Guise, was burned by German

1. S. Leathes, in The Cambridge Modern History, vol.i. (Cambridge, 1902), chap. XII, pp. 397-8.

2. M. Bloch, French rural history: an essay in its basic characteristics, tr. J. Sondheimer (London, 1966), pp. 102-20.

troops.³ On the other hand, at the Estates-General at Tours in 1484 the nobility adduced war and war expense as major reasons for their poverty.⁴ Furthermore, the demands of noble status to maintain a suitable standard of living accentuated the problem.⁵ The prodigality encouraged by such social pressures found its censure at Tours in 1484: the nobles were attacked for "... their excessive spending on buildings, gold and silver plate, clothes and belts for men and women, oversized households and over-sumptuous banquets and feasts...".⁶ Alain d'Albret's expensive rebuilding at Nérac is but one example of this trend.⁷

Perhaps comparatively few individuals would have fitted perfectly the scenario outlined above. Between one gentleman and another there were variations in fortune, depending on any number of factors, such as the geographical

3. A. Matton, Histoire de la ville et des environs de Guise, vol. i (Laon, 1897), p. 287.

4. J. Masselin, Journal des Etats généraux de France tenus à Tours en 1484, tr. and ed. A. Bernier, D.I. (Paris, 1835), p. 667.

5. On the question of nobles' spending, see H. Baudrillart, Histoire du luxe privé et public, vol. iii (Paris, 1880), pp. 379-98.

6. Masselin, op.cit., p. 197.

7. A. Luchaire, Alain le grand, sire d'Albret: l'administration royale et la féodalité du Midi (Paris, 1877), p. 50.

location of his estates,⁸ the nature of his revenues, in money or in kind, or his performance in the marriage market. However, the fact of increased pressure upon the nobleman's purse during the later fifteenth century, as a general rule for that class, from whatever combination of causes, is not contested. Even Russell Major, who insists on the growth of noble fortunes in the sixteenth century, recognises that government service was often the best means available to the aristocrat to remain solvent.⁹

One of those families for whom the English war had proved disastrous was that of Durfort-Duras. Gailhard de Durfort, a partisan of the English in Guienne, was banished from France in 1453, accompanied by only twelve servants. Naturally he had been "ruined and totally disinherited". Although treated more favourably in England than some of his fellow victims, he had nevertheless fallen into "dire poverty" by 1454. A commercial venture failed to restore his fortunes and he was hounded by

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8. R. Boutruche, for example, in his article "The devastation of rural areas during the Hundred Years War", in The recovery of France in the fifteenth century, ed. P.S. Lewis, (London, 1971), pp. 23-59, notes that whilst Béarn was largely untouched by war-damage, the Agenais was badly affected, ibid., p. 29.
 9. J. Russell Major, "The Crown and the aristocracy in Renaissance France," in American Historical Review, vol. LXIX (1964), pp. 631-45; p. 633; Representative institutions in Renaissance France (Madison, 1960), p. 15.

creditors. In short, he was only too eager to return to France.¹⁰ Gailhard was finally reinstated in his French possessions in 1477, and did not wait long before marrying his son, Jean, to Jeanne Angevin, the heiress of a wealthy, former notary of Bordeaux.¹¹ The match was designed to bolster up an illustrious but war-battered house. By his will of 1490 we can see that Jean, who had by this time inherited his late father's estates, was moderately well off: he had three castles, at Duras, Blanquefort outside Bordeaux, and Allemans; he retained a maître d'hôtel, and he was able to assign one thousand livres tournois and nine thousand livres bordelais to members of his family.¹² However, Jean de Durfort-Duras could still find himself short of funds, so that in June 1495 he sold to one Etienne Makaan (a Bordeaux merchant of English ancestry) the three houses of Thil, Tiran and Bussac, which Jeanne herself had brought for her dowry, for five thousand francs. Jean had seven years to repay the money if he wanted to redeem his wife's possessions. In other words, the sale was a form of loan on the security of some estates, from which Makaan would profit in the meantime, in lieu of interest.¹³

10. R. Boutruche, La crise d'une société: seigneurs et paysans du Bordelais, pendant la guerre de Cent ans (Paris, 1947), pp. 414-5.

11. Ibid., p. 374.

12. B.N., dossiers bleus 244 (dossier Durfort-Duras), fol. 70 vo..

13. R. Boutruche, Une société provinciale en lutte contre le régime féodal (Rodez, 1947), pp. 98, n.3 and 99. Information on the Durfort-Duras family is also drawn from the following works: J. Favre, Précis historique sur la famille de Durfort-Duras (Marmande, 1858); P. Lauzun, "Le château de Duras", in Revue de l'Agenais, vol. xlviii(1921), pp. 162-73; and Anselme, vol. v, pp. 343-5, although all three are not without errors and contradictions.

Against such a background it is not surprising to find that the established nobility found it difficult to increase the size of its domains by purchase. Bloch notes, for example, that of the forty lordships sold by Charles, Constable of Bourbon, or sold upon the forfeiture of his estates after his rebellion against Francis I, only three were acquired by 'ancient' noble families.¹⁴ On the contrary, the inveterate landed class seems to have been faced with a crisis of diminishing domains. At the Tours Estates, the nobles sought some indication from the Government that they would have the opportunity to redeem estates which had been sold to the Crown in the past - sales caused by poverty, itself occasioned by war and the poverty of their tenants.¹⁵

In short, the great disability of the landed nobility at the end of the fifteenth century was, as we might say today, a cash-flow problem. And of all the various options open for solving this crisis, that of entering the King's service was the most attractive, compared with the selling of estates, or the raising of loans, for instance. Luchaire has shown how Alain d'Albret, despite possessing lands equal in extent to ten modern départements, still had difficulty raising a loan in his later years.

14. Bloch, op.cit., p. 124.

15. Masselin, op.cit., p. 667.

The Albret family was the biggest landowner in France in 1500, after the King, but Alain was reduced to pawning and the alienation of his domain to finance his massive expenditure.¹⁶ In similar vein, Jean de Foix, vicomte de Narbonne, revealed in his will that he had incurred considerable debts. He foresaw the possibility of his son, Gaston, not being able to meet these demands promptly, without selling Narbonne; whose sale he consequently authorised in such circumstances. He asked the King to allow his heir to inherit his own pension and governorship of Dauphiné, "... so that he might be better able to defray his (Jean's) said debts". Large amounts owed to a particular family were to be redeemed by means of the revenue of the grenier in Foix's town of Etampes. To reward his kinsman and lieutenant of his compagnie d'ordonnance, Roger de Béarn, Jean authorised further domain alienation, which Gaston could only recuperate by means of a payment of ten thousand livres tournois.¹⁷ The shortage of ready cash had

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16. Luchaire, op.cit., pp. 36 and 50-67. Albret tended to pay his servants badly, which led on one occasion to some of his agents in Limousin resorting to robbery, ibid., pp. 61-2.
17. M. Boucher de Molandon, "Le testament de Jean, comte de Foix et d'Etampes, roi de Navarre (Orléans 27:10: 1500)", in Bulletin historique et philologique du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques (Paris, 1885), pp. 31-8; p.35.

prevented Jean de Foix from rewarding his valet de chambre, Gaston de St. Laurens, as he would have wished, a little earlier; lacking the three hundred gold écus he had promised his servant, Jean had to assign his man revenues in the viscounty of Narbonne until St. Laurens had been paid.¹⁸

It was perhaps this cash shortage which led some noblemen to turn to commerce, despite the risk to one's status involved in such activity. At least, Jean de Foix, and his brother James, were each granted commercial privileges by Charles VIII; for in 1492 Jean was accorded the right to raise four thousand tons of wheat in the seneschalships of Toulouse, Agenais and Quercy, and to export it abroad, "... for his profit and advantage, despite (the King's) prohibition on exports of corn and wine ...", free of any royal toll or duty.¹⁹ We know that he exported 1714 tons at least, through Bordeaux.²⁰ At the same time, James received similar privileges for three hundred tons. In 1492, two vessels at Bordeaux were charged with 258 tons of grain, which James was shipping free of the twenty sous' tournois per ton duty.²¹

18. B.N., p.o. 1174, no. 226.

19. Ibid., no. 211.

20. Ibid., no. 219.

21. Ibid., no. 209. Jean was also granted privileges to trade in wine, B.N., fr. 6602, fol. 171.

The French aristocracy needed cash and it was the King who provided it. If it is true that "... the budget of the state was to some extent a budget of noble assistance,²²" the receipt of a royal pension did nonetheless imply an obligation of service to the Crown. Pensions were specifically granted for one's "maintenance in royal service" for a given year, although entailing no particular task or duty. Indeed, more or less expensive charges or missions executed by a royal pensioner were, it appears, covered by extra payments. In 1493, for example, Louis d'Armagnac acquitted the Crown for 217 livres, 10 sous tournois granted to him, "... apart from his pension and other benefits, to help support the expenses he was making each day in the King's service, and especially in the trip he had made... conducting the ambassadors of the Emperor, of the King of the Romans and of the Archduke (of Austria), when they came to the King, concerning the peace. Before whom the King had sent him, from Compiègne to Melun, where he had spent much ... entertaining (them) ...".²³ Furthermore, Armagnac received an annual 1500 livres' tournois payment in 1493, and from 1495-97, to defray his costs, he being continually attendant on the King's person.²⁴ In the same way, Jean de Foix received

22. P. Contamine, "The French nobility and the war", in The Hundred Years War, ed. K. Fowler (London, 1971), pp. 135-62; p. 151.

23. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 387.

24. Ibid., nos. 389, 390, 393 and 395.

extra payments from Charles VIII in 1485 and 1492.²⁵ His brother James got 300 livres tournois from the Extraordinaire des Guerres in 1491, over and above his pension, "... to help him keep himself in (royal service)", in some temporary military capacity, it appears.²⁶

In other words, pensions were not salaries, nor were they really payments of expenses, as a modern businessman might receive, but were royal gratuities, varying in amount, according to the status of the recipient. Such a gradation ensured that, on the whole, however large one's personal fortune, a great part of one's income came from the King. In 1492, for instance, the 58,000 livres which the Duke of Bourbon drew from his domains was almost equalled by the 50,000 livres represented by his pension and governorship of Languedoc.²⁷ According to the Venetian envoy Contarini, writing in 1492, there were at least 2700 pensioners in France: the top payments reached 60,000 livres tournois, a sum enjoyed by only two individuals, the Dukes of Orléans and Bourbon,²⁸ and the range stretched from so massive a figure down to less than

25. B.N., p.o. 1174, nos. 195 and 210.

26. Ibid., no. 212.

27. P. Contamine, Guerre, État et société à la fin du moyen âge (Paris-Hague, 1972), pp. 441-2 and n.220.

28. Contarini's figures are presumably too high, in view of Contamine's illustration above.

400 livres.²⁹ However, since there existed at this time perhaps 30,000 noble houses in the realm,³⁰ we can see that the proportion of the nobility which was pensioned was small. Yet the most important families were covered and pensions constituted a fair proportion of Crown expenditure.

The pension was only one, if the most important method of subsidising or rewarding royal servants and powerful noblemen. Other, usually smaller payments were available for the same purposes. As Dupont-Ferrier said, the Crown regarded local offices as types of pensions.³¹ When Jean d'Albret, seigneur d'Orval, was governor of Champagne, he was also captain of Ha castle at Bordeaux, for which he was paid 360 livres in 1494.³² Obviously it would have been difficult for Orval personally to perform two functions at opposite ends of the kingdom at the same time. For some years, Roger de Béarn held the following posts simultaneously: captain of 100 lances, seneschal of

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29. Zaccaria Contarini's relation of 1492, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. E. Alberi, ser. I, vol. iv (Florence, 1860), pp. 3-26; pp. 20-1.
30. This figure is Contamine's estimate, op.cit., p.479. Contarini himself was told that there were two hundred thousand noble houses in France, but he did not believe this anyway, op.cit., p.22.
31. G. Dupont-Ferrier, Les officiers royaux des bailliages et sénéchaussées et les institutions monarchiques locales en France à la fin du moyen âge (Paris, 1902), p.468.
32. B.N., p.o. 2172 (dossier Orval), no.3. The governorship of Champagne was worth 2000 livres tournois in 1502-3, meanwhile the wages for the captaincy of Ha had, it seems, dropped to 300 livres by this time, B.N., fr. 2930, fols 88 vo. and 123.

Valentinois, governor of Soule, and captain of Trezzo, in Lombardy. The holding of provincial office did not then necessarily imply a full-time job, nor were the wages of office necessarily commensurate with the burden of responsibility of the office-holder, but were rather acknowledgements of the individual's status. For instance, after the death of Jean de Foix, governor of Dauphiné, in 1500, Louis XII confirmed Anthoine de Meurilhon, seigneur de Bressieu, in the post of lieutenant to the governor, but with gubernatorial authority. However, Gaston de Foix received the governor's salary from the time of his father's death, even though he did not exercise that office, even in a purely formal capacity, until the end of 1503.³³ In like manner, in 1492 Charles VIII had ordered that Gabriel d'Albret, seigneur d'Avesnes, still be paid his wages as grand seneschal of Guienne, amounting to 1200 livres tournois per annum, even though he was not personally carrying out the duties of that office, since he was occupied on royal business in Navarre.³⁴

Similarly, the captaincy of a company of lances was often an honorary position, a recognition of status rather than an effective command. A captain was paid twenty sous tournois, or one livre, per month, for each lance in his charge, so that a captain of a hundred lance company received 1200 livres a year, apart from his salary as a gendarme of 180 livres. The large payment was

33. B.N., Clair. 954, pp. 109 and 117.

34. B.N., p.o. 25, no. 217.

granted for the "right and status" of an individual as a captain of the Ordonnance, implying that the sum was a type of pension or gratuity. Indeed, companies were often commanded by their captains' lieutenant, such as the Albret company, which saw considerable service in Italy, whilst Alain d'Albret himself seems to have never visited the peninsula during the Italian Wars. On the other hand, after the death of Jean de Foix, his company passed to his young son Gaston, and although the captain's pension was paid to the lieutenant, Roger de Béarn, it was as late as 1504 when he acknowledged the receipt of 1800 livres for the captaincy during 1501, 1502 and 1503.³⁵ Evidently, for years the Crown was uncertain whether the Foix company's childish captain or its effective commander should be granted the 'right and status' of captaincy.

The rates of pay for military command and for administrative office were constant, but not so the level of pensions proper. As Contarini noted in 1492, in time of financial need the King either raised taxes, or he might cut pensions.³⁶ For example, Alain d'Albret's pension, which had stood at 18,000 livres in 1490-1, had been

35. B.N., p.o. 237 (dossier Béarn), no.32.

36. Contarini, *op.cit.*, p.19. In 1494, the Florentine ambassador in France reported that pensions for that year were to be delayed by six months, but he saw this as a device to encourage royal pensioners to come to serve the King, G. Canestrini and A. Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, D.L, vol.i (Paris, 1859), p. 294.

reduced to 14,000 by 1500-1, though it had again climbed to 17,000 by 1502-3.³⁷ Jean de Foix enjoyed a pension of 18,000 livres tournois in the year 1491-2. By 1495 it had been cut down to 11,000, whence it rose to 17,000 the next year. In 1497, Foix's pension stood at 12,000 livres (although it was not promptly paid, but remitted onto the budget of 1498, whilst one third of the pension of 12,000 livres for this year was postponed until 1499). By 1499, Foix's gratuity had climbed again to 14,000 livres tournois per annum.³⁸ We can see from these two examples how the large pensions of peacetime did not long survive the outbreak of war in Italy and the consequent demands on the royal finances. Whilst Charles VIII seems to have been unhappy to reduce gratuities to the level which his budget required, relying by contrast, to some extent, on remitting payments to following financial years, Louis XII had fewer qualms. The pension of 6000 livres of Louis d'Armagnac for 1497 was too much for that year's budget to cope with; half the sum was deferred to 1498. But by 1502, Armagnac's pension had dropped to 5000 livres tournois.³⁹ Others took a more radical drop in pay -

37. B.N., p.o.25, nos. 211 and 268, B.N., fr. 2927, fol. 53 vo.. The figures in Luchaire, Alain le grand, p.69, n.l, cannot be relied on, since they are based simply on individual receipts which do not always represent Albret's total pension for a given year.

38. B.N., Clair. 223, nos. 25 and 45; B.N., p.o. 1174, no. 216; B.N., Fr. 26104, no. 1166; p.o. 1174, nos. 222 and 227.

39. B.N., p.o. 95, nos. 394, 397 and 407.

Jehannot de Tardes, gentleman of the household, had his pension halved between 1498 and 1501, from 800 to 400 livres tournois per year.⁴⁰

Although most, perhaps all pensions appear to have suffered from the economies of the later 1490s, they did not necessarily fall in proportion to each other. When considering his benefactions the King evidently treated his greater subjects as individuals, rather than as simply more or less prestigious members of the upper class. One result of this approach was that one's status could change. In 1494 the pension of Gratien d'Aguerre, a man of modest beginnings, but of proven worth and a captain of fifty lances, stood at 2000 livres; by 1516 this sum had been cut by half,⁴¹ although Francis I was as well-known for his largesse during the earliest years of his reign as any King of France. But Gratien was now an old man who had effectively been in retirement for years. On the other hand, Gabriel d'Albret, seigneur de Lesparre, whose pension only stood at 1,200 livres in 1492, received 2,000 in 1496⁴², a rare increase during this period. However, by the latter date Lesparre was viceroy of Apulia, so that his gratuity had risen with his status. Odet de Foix, vicomte de Lautrec, received a modest 1000

40. B.N., p.o. 2795 (dossier Tardes), nos. 12-13. According to a Venetian source, Louis XII abolished many of his predecessor's pensions, Diarii, vol.ii, col. 763.

41. B.N., fr. 26104, no. 1005 and fr. 26115, no. 190.

42. B.N., p. o. 25, no. 208 and p.o. 26, no. 380.

livres in 1503⁴³, although within seven years he had become lieutenant-general in Lombardy, and, apart from other benefits, was to enjoy 12,000 livres tournois annually in that capacity, on the Milanese treasury.

It would seem, therefore, that the evidence of Gascon pensions bears out Contarini's assertion that such payments were entirely at the Crown's discretion. The King dispensed gratuities at will, in accordance with the standing of potential recipients in his service and favour, and with the state of his finances. Technically, of course, the Venetian was correct. However, noblemen who enjoyed little obvious favour with the King, nor fulfilled any notable service, can be found in receipt of fat pensions. If the King could follow his personal preferences in dispensing gratuities and honours to those whom he trusted and those whose fortunes largely depended upon his favour, it is doubtful if he was so free of constraint in his treatment of powerful landlords whose loyalty might be uncertain. In short, the Crown also paid out pensions as bribes, or at least felt it expedient to maintain such

43. B.N., p.o. 1175, no. 362. On the whole, under Louis XII the amount of money devoted to pensions declined: in 1492 they had accounted for 633,000 livres; by 1498 this had dropped to 498,000. Henceforth the figures were as follows:

1502	-	529,000 l.t.,
1503	-	647,000 l.t.,
1505	-	202,000 l.t.,
1511	-	105,000 l.t.,
1514	-	383,000 l.t.,

A. Spont, "La taille en Languedoc", in Annales du Midi, vol. ii (1890), pp. 365-84 and 478-513, and vol. iii (1891), pp. 482-94; vol. ii, pp. 508 and 510. No doubt Louis was able to cut French pension payments so drastically in mid-reign by shifting part of the burden onto the Milanese finances.

payments to individuals for whom the King might have no great liking, but who were powerful in their own right. How else can we explain the 4,000 livres' annual pension paid to Jean de Foix, seigneur de Lautrec, by Louis XII, for instance?⁴⁴ Lautrec was a servant of the Albret rulers of Navarre, and commanded their army in warfare against their rival, pretender to the Foix inheritance, Jean de Foix-Narbonne.⁴⁵ In 1493, he appears to have been involved in a campaign of intimidation in the county of Foix, on behalf of his patrons. Louis XII favoured his brother-in-law's and nephew's claim to the Foix estates, in opposition to the established occupants, yet he still paid Lautrec a handsome pension, and his eldest son, Odet, a smaller one, plus 1,200 livres as seneschal of Guienne.⁴⁶

It is interesting that the one man who appears to have received more cash from the King of France than any other during our period, was not only the greatest land-owner in the realm, after the Crown, but also an inveterate opponent of royal policy. According to Luchaire, by 1504 Alain d'Albret was a man for whom Louis XII felt little

44. B.N., p.o. 1173, no. 111, for 1504, for instance.

45. C. Higounet, Le comté de Comminges de ses origines à son annexion à la couronne, vol. ii (Toulouse-Paris, 1949), p. 622.

46. B.N., carrés d'Hozier 260 (dossier Foix), no. 212; B.N., p.o. 1175, nos. 354-5 and 357-9.

but ill-will,⁴⁷ yet two years later Alain's pension still stood at 17,000 livres tournois.⁴⁸ He remained a captain of fifty lances until 1507. But such benefits from a presumably grudging Louis XII were nothing compared with the massive 192,500 livres which Charles VIII promised Albret for the surrender of Nantes in 1491, during the Breton succession war.⁴⁹ Ironically, in 1490 Anne of Brittany had promised Alain 20,000 écus a year, for five years, for his services in ridding Brittany of her enemies.⁵⁰ Later, the King granted Albret 6,000 livres rent in Gascony and the royal claim to the county of Gaure and town of Fleurance, in return for the right Albret claimed on the duchy of Brittany itself.⁵¹ In other words, Alain

47. Luchaire, op.cit., p. 41.

48. B.N., fr. 23268, fol. 5. Royal disfavour did, however, take its toll of Albret family honours thereafter - it seems likely that Alain's pension was suppressed between 1507 and 1512, although by 1516 he again received 12,000 livres, and Charlotte d'Albret's gratuity was cut in 1507. Moreover, even when in receipt of a pension, Alain sometimes had to bribe royal officials to hand over his due. Finally, in 1508, Albret was deprived of the captaincy of Bayonne, although he retained the wages of office, Luchaire, op.cit., pp. 69, n.1, 70, 40, 71 and 76, n.3, respectively.

49. B.N., p.o. 25, nos. 209-10. In June 1491, Albret acknowledged the receipt of 30,000 livres, saying that he had already had 12,000, ibid., no. 212.

50. B.N., Moreau 370, p. 200. Alain was promised an annual pension of 12,000 livres, plus 100 lances and other benefits, by Anne of Brittany, according to a modern authority, J.S.C. Bridge, A history of France from the death of Louis XI, vol. 1. (Oxford, 1921), p.214. Presumably he received nothing of this bounty, after his betrayal of the duchess.

51. B.N., Moreau 370, p. 204; Luchaire, Alain le grand, pp. 70 and 150.

d'Albret made a stupendous profit from his politicking and double-dealing during the Breton succession crisis. Nor did the rewards of his involvement in affairs of state stop there; 10,000 francs, assigned to César Borgia by Louis XII, for the dowry of Albret's daughter, Charlotte, César's wife, finally came to Alain after Borgia's disgrace, in 1505.⁵² Meanwhile, the marriage contract had obliged Borgia to pay Albret 100,000 livres, for which sum the King stood security; by January 1503 one fifth of the amount had been paid to Alain.⁵³ Doucet claims that French noblemen received honours from the King at this time, in return for restrictions on their independence; that an understanding had developed on these lines, which undermined the rights of lords in such matters as taxation and private war.⁵⁴ If such a tacit agreement existed, Alain d'Albret turned it on its head quite successfully. In return for vast sums of money and honours for himself and his children, Albret not only rebelled against the Crown and held it to ransom at Nantes, as we have seen, but he presided at the head of a family empire in which Estates flourished,⁵⁵ and whose

52. B.N., Doat 228, fol. 194.

53. B.N., p.o. 26, nos. 345-6. César and Charlotte would have received 100,000 livres from Louis XII, according to Luchaire, op.cit., p.32.

54. R. Doucet, Les institutions de la France au XVIe. siècle, vol. i. (Paris, 1948), pp. 44-5.

55. Russell Major, Representative institutions, p.19. In December 1499, the three Estates of the county of Foix did homage to the King and Queen of Navarre (Jean d'Albret and Catherine de Foix), B.N., Doat 227, fol. 223.

resources were sometimes mobilised for private warfare, as in the Foix-Navarre inheritance dispute. Furthermore, Béarn retained its autonomy throughout Alain's lifetime.⁵⁶ When Jean d'Albret, King of Navarre and Alain's eldest son, did homage to Louis XII for his French territories in 1502, Béarn was not included amongst them.⁵⁷ Some time before this, Louis had written to the King of Navarre, lord of Béarn, asking if he might expel French criminals from that territory.⁵⁸ Louis XII's writ did not prevail in Béarn.

In his discussion of French affairs, Machiavelli wrote that the King "... alone sold or gave away every office and employment in the realm."⁵⁹ Like Contarini, some twenty years earlier, the Florentine was impressed by the power of patronage which the King of France enjoyed, and the subservience of his subjects to his will. Nevertheless, the King of France himself might well have felt

56. Béarn retained its independence largely because of the threat of Spanish intervention, in the event of French expansion, A. Viala, Le Parlement de Toulouse et l'administration royale laïque (1420-1525 environ), vol. ii (Albi, 1953), pp. 198-237. See also P. Tucoc-Chala, La vicomté de Béarn et le problème de sa souveraineté (Bordeaux, 1961), pp. 101-20.

57. B.N., Doat 227, fol. 247.

58. B.N., n.a.fr. 1462, no. 198.

59. N. Machiavelli, "Sketch of the constitution and affairs of France", in Works of Nicholas Machiavel, tr. E. Farnsworth, 2nd ed., vol. ii (London, 1775), pp. 493-512; p.506.

less sure of his own autonomy in the matter of dispensing office. Noblemen believed in their right to serve as the chief officers of the King, by dint of their birth, or at least intended that the Crown should so believe. At the Estates-General of Tours in 1484, a major noble grievance concerned the number of official positions held by foreigners, in the royal household, in the provinces and so on.⁶⁰ Although the Tours assembly took place during the minority of Charles VIII, a time which pandered to disputes and jealousies of such a nature, the grievances expressed were, in great measure, a reaction against the arrogant policies of Louis XI. But if Louis made enemies with his unconventional promotions, he also recognised the sensibilities of his servants. For example, Jean de Foix-Narbonne was made governor of Guienne in 1467, but the creation of the Duchy of Guienne as an apanage for the royal brother, Charles of France, left Narbonne redundant, so that in 1469 the King granted him 4,000 livres rent on the county of Comminges. When, in 1472, Comminges was made over to Odet Aydie, compensation had again to be found for Narbonne. In 1475 he received the county of Etampes.⁶¹ Later, in 1497, Jean de Foix-Narbonne was compensated for his failure to become count of Comminges by being granted the governorship of Dauphiné by Charles

60. Masselin, Journal des Etats généraux, pp. 668-9.

61. J. de Jaurgain, Deux comtes de Comminges béarnais au XVe siècle (Paris, 1919), p. 62.

VIII.⁶² In 1491, by the terms of the Nantes treaty, Alain d'Albret was accorded the offices of governor and seneschal of Guienne by Charles VIII; since these posts were then held by Gaston de Foix, comte de Candale, the latter was accommodated with the governorship of La Rochelle. But what of the former governor? He, one Olivier Mérichon, appealed to the Parlement of Paris against his dismissal.⁶³ Charles VIII was more careful to respect his subjects' 'rights' over the matter of the mayoralty of Bayonne, in 1492. Roger de Gramont, seigneur de Bidache, had been deprived of the seneschalship of Lannes, as that office had been required to reward another. It was decided that Gramont should become maire of Bayonne in exchange, but first the existing holder would have to be removed. This was none other than Etienne Makanan, the ennobled merchant who was to have commercial dealings with Durfort-Duras. Makanan was asked if he might be willing to vacate his office in favour of Gramont, and he proved to be agreeable, on condition that he were paid off. As a result Makanan was granted an annual 500 livres and a lump sum of 1,000 livres tournois.⁶⁴

62. C. Higounet, "Charles VIII, Jean de Foix-Narbonne et le comté de Comminges", in Revue Historique, vol. cxcvii (1947), pp. 216-20; p. 220.

63. G.R., nos. 20138-9.

64. B.N., fr. 25717, no. 135. The wages of the mayoralty of Bayonne also amounted to 500 livres a year. The seneschalship of Lannes was worth 365 livres.

This sense of proprietorship of an office-holder, illustrated by the parvenu Makanan's bargaining with the King over the terms of his redundancy, is also demonstrated by the incidence of hereditary succession to office. We have noted how Jean de Foix-Narbonne asked Louis XII to permit his son, Gaston, to succeed to the governorship of Dauphiné, and to the other benefits which Narbonne held of the King; which request was granted, despite Gaston's youth. Less illustrious families were similarly favoured. By 1525, Roger de Gramont had been replaced as maire and captain of Bayonne by his heir, Jean de Gramont.⁶⁵ In the same way, after the death of Menaud d'Aguerre, a Basque adventurer who distinguished himself in Italy, his position as captain, castellan and viguier of Sommières went to his nephew, Martin.⁶⁶ The son of Gratien d'Aguerre, Menaud's brother, was not so fortunate. After Gratien's death, his office of governor of Mouzon was granted to Louis de Hangest, seigneur de Montmort, whilst Gratien's company also went to the newcomer. As lieutenant of his father's company, Jean d'Aguerre might have entertained a reasonable expectation of its inheritance, but his claims failed to stand up against the desire of Francis I

65. B.N., p.o. 1388 (dossier Grammont), no. 50.

66. B.N., p.o. 1432 (dossier Guerres), no. 17. Martin held Sommières from 1504, at the latest; the wages were 40 livres tournois per year.

to promote a more favoured individual.⁶⁷ But despite this exception, the frequency of family succession must lead us to assume that in many cases an office-holder had an important say in the selection of his replacement. Thus Roger de Béarn was succeeded as captain of Mauléon and governor of Soule by his brother, Menaud,⁶⁸ and Raymond de Cardailhac, seigneur de St. Cirq-Lapopie, was followed as seneschal of Quercy in 1501 by his son, Jacques, although the latter had to attest before the Parlement of Toulouse that he had not bribed his way into office.⁶⁹

The pressure exerted on the Crown in the matter of the distribution of patronage did not derive simply from one direction, from the claims of noblemen to bounty. The King was not alone in his concern for the wealth of his estate. In 1484, there had been complaints at Tours over the abundance of pensions included in the budget which the deputies were asked to peruse; such gratuities, they claimed, should only be paid as rewards for outstanding

67. J. de Jaurgain, "Profils basques, Menaud et Gratien d'Aguerre", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées (partie historique de la Revue de Béarn), vol. iv (1886), pp. 1-59, 135-78 and 331-72; pp. 145-6; B.N., fr. 21510, no. 946. Jean d'Aguerre left the company when Hangest assumed command, although he did receive his father's pay as captain, for the first three months of 1516, B.N., Clair. 3, no. 70.

68. J. de Jaurgain, "Les capitaines châtelains de Mauléon, gouverneurs de la vicomté de Soule", in Revue de Béarn, Navarre et Lannes, vol. ii (1884), pp. 113-41 and 241-341; p. 253.

69. G.R., nos. 20138-9.

service.⁷⁰ Others took more serious action to attempt to flout the enjoyment of gifts from the King. Again in 1484, Charles VIII granted to the children of the late Jacques d'Armagnac, who included Louis d'Armagnac, the territories which they claimed as successors to their maternal uncle, Charles d'Anjou, until such time as the Parlement of Paris had determined the rightful possession of the lands. The royal procureur of the Parlement insisted that Anjou's legacy formed part of the King's domain and so could not be alienated, and he even prevented the receipt by the Armagnac of 6,000 livres a year on the estates, which Charles VIII had previously ordained to the children, until the fate of the lands was decided.⁷¹ Some years later, after Charles gave Jean de Foix-Narbonne the seigniorial rights to Fontenay-le-Comte, for ten years, the royal receveur of Poitou refused to allow Narbonne his due profit. The Chambre des Comptes, protesting that Fontenay-le-Comte formed part of the Crown domains, had, it seems, failed to inform the local official of Charles' decision.⁷² Sometime during the early years of his reign, Louis XII granted to Louis d'Armagnac the revenues of the greniers of Nemours and a number of

70. Masselin, op.cit., pp. 378-9.

71. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 364. The Armagnac prevailed eventually, and the grant was confirmed in May 1492, B.N., fr. 2919, fol. 88.

72. B.N., fr. 10238, fol. 109.

other towns, for one year, but some of the grenetiers held on to monies to which Armagnac was entitled.⁷³ Although in the latter case the motive for opposition to the King's instructions might well have been compounded of self-interest, it is evident from the other examples that some officers of the Crown at least did not recognise the royal patrimony to be simply the personal property of the King himself. On the contrary, the monarch had a responsibility to conserve the Crown's domains. The patrimony was to be protected against the whims of the man who occupied the throne of France, as if by accident.

The Parlement of Toulouse was notorious for its opposition to royal alienations. During the 1480s this institution fought to establish its competence to adjudge the fate of Alain d'Albret's county of Gaure, whose ownership had been confirmed by royal sanction in 1483 and had been supported by judgements of the Parlement of Bordeaux. Albret's rebellion against the Crown gave Toulouse its chance to reunite Gaure with the royal domain in 1489, but after Alain's reinstatement, the Parlement continued its opposition to the alienation of Gaure, and did not stop at the arrest of royal agents in the county. The Parlement of Toulouse installed its own administration in Gaure, by force of arms. In 1492, Albret retook Fleurance, capital of the county, but although he was able to retain Gaure till 1506, some Parlement officers were

73. B.N., fr. 5093, fol. 179.

still depriving him of certain revenues as late as 1496.⁷⁴ The Parlement of Toulouse also had a history of opposition to royal attempts to grant away the county of Comminges; to compensate Jean de Foix-Narbonne for his failure to make good his claims to the Foix inheritance, Charles VIII intended to make him count of Comminges, but both Parlements, of Paris and Toulouse, were unwilling to sanction the gift. The King was persuaded by Toulouse's demonstration of the strategic importance of the Pyrenean territory, in view of Spanish hostility, but under Louis XII the Parlement was again obliged to fight when the King granted Comminges to another claimant, Lautrec. This opposition failed, yet by continued pressure the counsellors managed to ensure that by 1502 the county returned to the King's estate in theory, even though the Lautrec continued to enjoy its fruits.⁷⁵

When Jean Guillemette, procureur in Lauragais, explained to Charles VIII the good reasons why Comminges

74. Viala, op.cit., ii, pp. 76-8; Luchaire, op.cit., pp. 146-52 and 200.

75. The struggle for Comminges is recounted in Higounet's two works, Le comté de Comminges, ii, pp. 609-27, and "Charles VIII, Jean de Foix-Narbonne et le comté de Comminges," in Revue Historique, vol. cxcvii, pp. 216-20. In August 1499, an agent of the Parlement of Toulouse acknowledged the receipt of 36 livres tournois, for two trips to Comminges, to ensure that "... the said county went into royal hands, not those of Lautrec or others", B.N., fr. 26106, no. 96.

should not be alienated, he noted that the barons of the county could provide thirty men-at-arms and sixty archers.⁷⁶ The power of the nobility, and hence its essential potential threat to the Crown, stemmed from its military resources. The troops which followed noble banners to battle no longer, by our period, constituted a feudal army. By the fourteenth century the system of clientage was evolving, and armies were formed of paid soldiers who may, or may not have been vassals of the army commander.⁷⁷ The practice of paying one's retainers, in a time of financial stringency, had not, however, emasculated the military potential of the great Gascon landowners, although the noble demand of 1484 that the Crown pay for the service of the feudal levy, or ban, reveals that this duty of armed service was regarded as a financial burden by those eligible for summons.⁷⁸ At the start of Charles VIII's reign, Jean de Foix-Narbonne led a force of 5,000 men into Lauragais, in pursuance of his quarrel with the rulers of Navarre, over the Foix inheritance.⁷⁹ Alain d'Albret raised 3,000 troops to fight Narbonne a little

76. Higounet, "Charles VIII", p. 218.

77. Contamine, "The French nobility", in The Hundred Years War, ed. Fowler, p. 148.

78. Masselin, op.cit., pp. 666-7.

79. Jaurgain, Deux comtes de Comminges, p. 134.

later, whom, together with 1,000 mercenaries recruited in Spain, he despatched to Brittany in 1488, during the succession crisis.⁸⁰ Albret's status and resources in south-west France made him the natural lieutenant for the King in the region, despite his sometimes dubious loyalty. In 1495 he was charged with guarding Languedoc against possible Spanish incursion, and he had under his command 1,000 infantry and 150 lances, *petite paye*.⁸¹ In July 1503, Albret was made lieutenant and captain-general "... in the war... in Guienne,⁸²" and had the duty of leading the ban and arrière-ban of much of southern France to the threatened frontier, after the levies had assembled at Agen.⁸³ But if Albret's power in Gascony made it convenient for the King of France to use him as his local war-leader, it also posed a threat to royal policy. For instance, in 1498 Albret attempted to capture the castle

80. Ibid., p. 150. Luchaire gives larger figures for Albret's forces at various times, including seven or eight thousand men assembled at Nontron in 1486, for service in Brittany, and seven thousand at the siege of Fleurance in 1492, op.cit., pp. 145 and 147. Such troops were no doubt usually mercenary soldiers, as were those employed by Jean de Foix-Narbonne in his war for the county of Foix - when ordered to leave Mazères in 1486, after royal intervention to pacify the Foix inheritance dispute, Narbonne's troops threatened to desert to the enemy, ibid., p. 192.

81. B.N., fr. 26104, no. 1069 and p.o. 25, no. 220.

82. B.N., Doat 228, fol. 48.

83. B.N., fr. 26108, no. 469; this is a commission to lead the levy of Auvergne to Agen, by 4th August 1503. Alain guarded the Atlantic frontier with five thousand men, Auton, vol. iii, p. 190, n.4.

of St. Sulpice, which had been a possession of the late Boffile de Juge and had subsequently been adjudged to the Crown by the Parlement of Toulouse; the sousviguier of the seneschalship of Toulouse was obliged to defend the castle against "... a great number of lackeys and vagabonds ..." in Albret's service.⁸⁴

Albret's influence was an embarrassment to Louis XII. At the beginning of 1503, César Borgia asked the King if he might raise 200 men-at-arms and 1,000 foot in Gascony, for service in Italy. Albret was given the task of raising the troops, owing to the extent of his domains in the south-west; the Venetian envoy in France predicted that the soldiers would be 'relatives' of Albret's. Fearful of Borgia's intentions, the Venetians expressed to Louis their preference for delay in despatching the new troops to Italy. The King told them that they would not be sent before May, but the Venetian representatives pointed out that Albret could send the force on his own initiative, owing to his great power. At this the King grew angry, exclaiming that "... there was only one King in France, and

84. B.N., fr. 26106, no. 45. According to Luchaire, St. Sulpice had formed part of the Albret patrimony since the reign of Charles VII, although the possession was contested by the Parlement of Toulouse, which adjudged it to the Crown in 1510, Alain le grand, p. 204. However, the document cited refers to St. Sulpice as a property of the late Boffile de Juge - no doubt it formed part of the county of Castres, which Juge bequeathed to Alain in 1494, ibid., p. 212.

he would say when troops crossed the Alps".⁸⁵

Gascony was a region in which the authority of the Crown was relatively weak, compared with most other parts of France. Not only was it distant from the political centre of the country, but there was also a recent history of rebellion against the King. For example, it is interesting to look at the Gascon captains of the Ordonnance during the Italian Wars, and to find that if only Alain d'Albret and Odet Aydie le Jeune⁸⁶ had waged war against Charles VIII, two others, Louis d'Armagnac, whose father, Jacques, was executed for treason in 1477, and Jean de Durfort, whose father, Gailhard, served Henry VI of England and was exiled from France for decades, were but one generation away from serious opposition to the Crown. Nevertheless, the chief foundation of Gascony's independence was surely the fact that so much of the territory was the property of only a handful of individuals, even as late as the sixteenth century, and despite incorporating no apanages of the Crown. In 1520, the Venetian ambassador to Milan stressed the point when he maintained that the house of Foix had "... the following

85. Diarii, iv, cols. 647 and 774-5.

86. In 1487, he defended Blaye against a royal army, and the next year Châteaubriant, Jaurgain, Deux comtes de Comminges, pp. 144-5 and 150-1.

of all of Aquitaine."⁸⁷ He exaggerated somewhat, and besides, he must have included the Albret family in 'the house of Foix', to which it was indeed closely related by blood and marriage; but the Venetian went on to explain the implications of such a concentration of resources: Odet de Lautrec, in whom the envoy was chiefly interested, possessed lands and castles in abundance in south-west France, whence he drew a rent of 7 to 8,000 ducats, and moreover, he could raise 12,000 footsoldiers in his territories.⁸⁸ In fact, the Albret strength was more impressive. By marrying his son, Jean, to the heiress of the King of Navarre, count of Foix, Alain had united the two great empires of the south-west in 1484. Even after the loss of haute-Navarre to Spain in 1512, this Foix inheritance represented weighty military potential. For example, a contemporary history of the counts of Foix recounts how at least 1,500 men-at-arms, of France and Navarre, attended the coronation of François Phoebus, King of Navarre, in 1481. The number was fairly modest, continues the history, since at the present time there were over 1,000 gentlemen owing homage to Jean d'Albret and his wife, Catherine de Foix, in the lands of Foix and Béarn. There were 700 in Béarn alone.⁸⁹

87. Gianjacopo Caroldo's relation of 1520, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. A. Segarizzi, vol. ii (Bari, 1913), pp. 3-29; p.12.

88. ibid., p. 13.

89. B.N., p.o. 1177, fol. 686; this work was evidently composed during the latter part of the reign of Louis XII. Even as relatively modest a landowner as the comte d'Astarac was able to provide 2500 Gascon crossbowmen, 400 mounted crossbowmen (two-thirds of them "gentlemen") and 60 men-at-arms, for service in Italy in 1495, L-G. Pélissier, "Notes italiennes de l'histoire de France: une lettre politique de Guillaume Briçonnet", in Annales de Bretagne, vol. ix (1893-4), pp. 417-23; p.421.

Such military potential could only be made effective by means of money; so that in the last analysis the power of the aristocracy, relative to the Crown, depended upon the comparative value of the income of the two. Landowners were not entirely reliant upon the King for a large cash income, as we have seen. Contamine reckons that the average landed fortune of a captain of the Ordonnance of middling rank, in the later fifteenth century, was perhaps 2,500-4,000 livres per annum.⁹⁰ In 1497, the sum which Jean de Foix-Narbonne was promised for renouncing his rights to the Foix inheritance amounted to an annual rent of 4,000 livres tournois.⁹¹ In 1501, in return for renouncing his claim to the county of La Marche and other territories, Louis d'Armagnac was granted 2,500 livres' tournois rent per annum by the Duke of Bourbon, redeemable on a lump sum of 50,000.⁹² These

90. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société, p. 440. The more lowly man-at-arms was a proverbially impecunious figure: Henri Baude's "gorrier bragart" is hard-up, having recklessly expended his resources in the army, on fine clothes, and he attempts to recoup his loss through gambling. He has, he says "... a property in pawn for more than its worth, from which he takes the fruits; but it is of no consequence to him, for he will take such a wife that the match will make his fortune", J. Quicherat, "Henri Baude, poète ignoré du temps de Louis XI et Charles VIII," in B.E.C., vol. x (1848-9), pp. 93-133; pp. 121-2. Although gendarmes of this type were not pensioned by the Crown, they would become indirect clients of the King through their attachment to a great man, such as their company captain.

91. B.N., Doat 228, fol. 67.

92. Titres de Bourbon, vol. ii, no. 7524.

figures, used to settle claims to extensive territories, appear trifling compared with the pensions which men like Narbonne and Armagnac received from the King. Besides, the nobility had no great opportunity to raise its income, outside royal service, whereas the King enjoyed the privilege, or rather, by our period, the right to tax his subjects. The nobleman might augment his wealth by a judicious marriage: Jean de Foix-Narbonne received 10,000 livres from the Duchess of Orléans after marrying her daughter Marie, in 1473;⁹³ Louis d'Armagnac was promised a dowry of 80,000 livres for his wife, Françoise d'Alençon, in 1500.⁹⁴ But such outlets were obviously rare. On the other hand, we have seen how in 1484 the frustration caused by permanent alienation of fiefs to the Crown surfaced at Tours, and also how assiduously Crown officials watched over the King's grants of lands and revenues to his servants. Once a territory was lost to the Crown, it must have been especially difficult to redeem it. For example, when Isabeau de la Tour, the mother of Jean d'Albret, seigneur d'Orval, and his brother, Gabriel de Lesparre, consented to exchange a number of possessions in Poitou with Louis XI, she appears to have failed to acquire her agreed compensation, in the form of some lordships in Périgord. At least, her sons were deprived of their enjoyment, it seems. As a result, in 1483 Charles VIII paid off Orval and Lesparre with an award of

93. B.N., p.o. 1174, no. 173.

94. Titres de Bourbon, ii, no. 7525.

15,000 livres tournois.⁹⁵ Besides, Jean d'Orval received an annual 1750 livres from the Crown, throughout our period, for certain territories which his wife had abandoned in favour of Louis XI, for the "welfare and use of the realm."⁹⁶ The enjoyment of a private estate was converted into maintenance by the Crown.

Meanwhile, the income of the King had ceased to bear much resemblance to that of a nobleman, however extensive his estates. It derived only in small measure from rents, and rested principally upon direct taxation. Contarini's relation of 1492 suggests that royal expenditure at the time totalled twice the value of the 'ordinary' revenues of the Crown. Direct taxation, therefore,

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95. B.N., fr. 20432, p.33. The major advantage of a royal pension over domain revenue, for the nobleman, was that it consisted entirely of cash and was, it seems, usually regularly paid. A contemporary reckoned Alain d'Albret's revenue at a quarter of a million livres - a stupendous figure, even by the standards of his peers. But this was partially payable in kind the county of Castres, for instance, was worth 10,000 livres per annum, but only 6207 of these were payable in cash, Luchaire, op.cit., pp. 59-60. The receipt of a royal pension, though not always without its problems itself, must have seemed a more convenient method of financing heavy expenditure than struggling with obdurate domainal officials, to ensure delivery of dues, and fighting off the encroachments of royal agents and others. For Albret's case, see ibid., p. 203. The pursuit of royal favour seems to have become something of an undignified scramble - Jean Bouchet thought La Trémoille a worthier man for having been, according to his biographer, the least importunate magnate at court, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in Collection des...mémoires, ed. M. Petitot, vol.xiv, p.445.
96. See, for example, quittances of Orval in B.N., p.o. 25, nos. 215-6 and 227, and p.o. 26, no. 370.

was used to fund half the government budget.⁹⁷ The Venetian included many customary revenues, such as the gabelle, under his umbrella of 'ordinary' income, not just domain receipts. Even so, his assertions were off the mark. In fact, the taille was responsible for a good deal more than half of Crown revenue. Although the King's income from his domain increased considerably during our period, the importance of such funds had long since been belittled by 'extraordinary' income; and, on the whole, this latter source of funds even grew in relative importance during our period. In 1483, the taille was responsible for 3.9 million livres out of a total Crown income of 4.6 million; by 1497 the ratio was 2.3 to 3.5 million (excluding the receipts from Burgundy and Provence, which were minimal); by 1514 the ratio was 3.7 to 4.9 million (again with the same exclusions).⁹⁸

Between these dates, the level of income from the taille varied considerably, although it never reached the heights of the last year of Louis XI's reign, 1483. Contarini explained in 1492 that the defeat of the pretensions of the Estates-General in 1484 to regulate

97. Contarini's relation, in Relazioni, ed. Albèri, iv, pp. 17-8.

98. Spont, "La taille en Languedoc", in Annales du Midi, ii, pp. 368 and n.1, 369 and ns. 1 and 2, 505 and 509. There seems to be some inconsistency in the taille figure for 1514, variously given by Spont as 2.89 million livres (p.369, n.2) and 3.7 million (p.509); the latter figure is quoted in the text, as it is obviously the correct one.

direct taxation at two-yearly intervals had left Charles VIII free to fix the taille level at whatever rate he pleased.⁹⁹ Two decades later, Machiavelli echoed this conclusion. Louis XII laid imposts on his people "... according to his pleasure," being sovereign in matters of taxation. Machiavelli could never gain any statistics for Crown finances when he was in France, but he was always told that royal revenue and expenditure were "... as much as the King pleased to make them."¹⁰⁰ When we realise also that French nobles were forbidden to levy taxes or loans on their tenants, whilst those loans which the King demanded of them were very seldom repaid,¹⁰¹ we may understand by how much the King had out-distanced his greater subjects in financial resources. Besides, in 1498 Louis XII confiscated all offices dispensed by his predecessor, and resold them.¹⁰²

In fact, the King was not entirely free to fix the rate of direct taxation as he pleased. The 1484 Estates failed to establish a precedent for control of the

99. Contarini, op.cit., p.20.

100. Machiavelli, "Sketch of France", in Works, tr. Farnsworth, ii, p. 503. On page 506, the author incorrectly talks of an annual Estates-General being convoked for tax purposes.

101. Ibid., pp. 504 and 503.

102. L-G. Pélissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol. i (Paris, 1896), p. 383.

taille, whilst violent opposition to taxation had largely ceased by the middle of the fifteenth century, and even then the opposition had never accused the Crown of abusing its authority by raising taxes.¹⁰³ In Languedoc, however, the privileges of the province insisted that consent of the regional Estates be obtained before taxes were levied. Louis XI flouted such privileges successfully at times, and Louis XII had few disputes with Languedoc, but in 1494, when Charles VIII attempted to impose a *crue* on the province without consent, he faced objections. But Languedoc only accounted for about 10 per cent of the national tax levy anyway. Normandy, a much more important tax area, providing a quarter of the national *taille* throughout our period, had no real control of its levy.¹⁰⁴

A more effective brake on excessive taxation was quite simply the pressure of public opinion and the sensitivity of the Government. Charles VIII kept his tax level relatively low, by comparison with the previous reign, although he ran into trouble because he failed to cut expenditure accordingly.¹⁰⁵ His father's exactions

103. P.D. Solon, "Popular response to standing military forces in fifteenth century France", in Studies in the Renaissance, vol. xix (1972), pp. 78-111; p.91.

104. Spont, op.cit., ii, pp. 485-502, and iii, p. 484, n.2.

105. Ibid., ii, p. 508.

had become legendary, so much so that Contarini could recount in 1492 that the taxes of Louis XI had driven thousands from France.¹⁰⁶ It was perhaps the memory of his father's unpopularity which led Charles VIII to tread somewhat warily when determining the taille rate. When in May 1494, he informed the élus of Arques of the imposition of an increment of 25 per cent on the rate for that year, Charles held out the prospect of the revenues of Naples, which would soon fall into his hands, so that "... the people ... could henceforth be greatly relieved."¹⁰⁷ In 1496, Charles VIII offered his subjects the justification of considerable economies, including the disbandment of 500 lances, for his decision to levy a third of the taille for the following year, in advance.¹⁰⁸ Louis XII was more successful in cutting expenditure¹⁰⁹ but even so was perhaps more solicitous of the public weal. The conquests of Milan, Genoa and Naples had been undertaken without any increase in the tax burden, the King wrote from Asti in September 1502, seeking to disarm potential opposition to his policies.¹¹⁰ In October 1513, the King told the

106. Contarini, op.cit., p.20.

107. B.N., fr. 26104, no. 995.

108. P. de Commynes, Mémoires, ed. Mlle. Dupont, vol. iii (Paris, 1848), p. 429.

109. Spont, op.cit., ii, pp. 509-10.

110. B.N., fr. 25718, no.65.

élus of bas-Limousin of his multifold financial commitments and of his exhaustive search for money, by engaging his domain, accepting gifts, cutting salaries and imposing loans, when informing them of his decision to increase the taille for 1514.¹¹¹ One of the financial expedients which Louis had used some years before, to evade an intolerable tax burden, was the appropriation of a third of a million livres from the clerical tithe, accorded by Alexander VI for crusading purposes.¹¹²

Sensitivity to public opinion is not, however, the equivalent of control of Crown revenues by public representatives. If the King felt unwilling to push his demands up to the level of the early 1480s, he did nonetheless retain the flexibility accorded by his position of near-sovereignty in tax matters. Furthermore, the conquests in Italy brought a new dimension to the finances of the French monarchy.¹¹³ There is no doubt that by our period the King of France was an economic giant, compared with even his greatest subjects. And

111. B.N., fr. 25719, no. 209.

112. B.N., Clair. 633, fol. 167.

113. The Neapolitan budget of 1502 anticipated a receipt of at least 571,000 livres tournois, B.N., fr. 2930, fol. 18. The revenue of Milan rose from 716,000 livres in 1510 to over a million by 1517, A.N., J.910, nos. 1 and 5.

the respective positions of the two sides would only grow further apart as the sixteenth century progressed. By 1546, the Venetian ambassador, Cavalli, could maintain that, "the princes, being poor, dared try nothing against the King...".¹¹⁴ The nobility was indeed harnessed into royal service under Charles VIII and Louis XII. It was the exclusive, selective nature of Louis XI's patronage which had offended so many - noblemen simply could not afford to be ignored by the Crown.

114. M.Cavalli's relation, in Relations des ambassadeurs vénétiens sur les affaires de France au XVIe siècle, tr. and ed. M.N. Tommasco, vol. i (Paris, 1838), pp. 249-363; pp. 276-7.

CHAPTER TWO

CAPTAINS OF THE ORDONNANCE AND THEIR COMPANIES

In his old age, Blaise de Monluc, Marshal of France, looked back upon his military career, and recalled how, in 1521, he had been preferred to an archer's place in the compagnie d'ordonnance of Thomas de Foix, seigneur de Lescun; such a position was "... highly regarded at that time. For great men served in the companies, and two or three even as archers. But since then everything had degenerated...."¹ Even after taking due account of the prejudices of a bitter old soldier whose ambitions have been frustrated, it is still probably true to say that Monluc joined the Ordonnances when they were already past their peak. The period of the early Italian Wars marked the heyday of the French heavy cavalry, although even then the inadequacies of the arm were becoming apparent. Brantôme had heard from retired captains that it was during the reign of Louis XII that the companies reached the highest quality, perfected in countless campaigns against Italians and Spaniards, feared throughout the world.²

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1. B. de Monluc, Commentaires (1521-1576), ed. P. Courteault (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964), p.30.
 2. P. de Bourdeilles, seigneur de Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, ed. P. Mérimée and L. Lacour, vol. iii, p.90.

During the years of Charles VIII and his successor there was no shortage of recruits. The companies were attended by bands of young adventurers seeking places in the ranks. The greatest nobles of France were included amongst the captains.

Some expressed doubts about the worth of the standing army, such as Thomas Basin, who described the Ordonnances of Louis XI as "... troops as numerous as they were useless...³", but on the whole the military value of the companies was rarely called into question. Complaints arose largely out of the burdens imposed by standing forces both on the taxpayer and the inhabitant of the garrison town. The nobles of France, rather than mercenary soldiers, were the natural defenders of the realm, many cried, such as Jean Masselin at the Estates-General of 1484, although the deputies lacked the conviction to advocate complete abolition of the Ordonnances, but only recommended a reduction in numbers.⁴ The nobles' grievances at the same assembly echoed this view, but they went on to complain about the frequency of ban summonses and the lack of opportunity to secure commands in the regular army⁵. A return to the old ways could not

3. T. Basin, Histoire de Louis XI, tr. and ed. C. Samaran and M-C. Garand, vol. iii (Paris, 1972), p. 321.

4. Masselin, Journal des Etates généraux, p. 371.

5. ibid., pp. 666-9.

really be contemplated. The compagnies d'ordonnance had driven out the English and their original captains had now become literary heroes.⁶ The Italian Wars spread the reputation of the French heavy cavalry abroad. Machiavelli, writing in 1512, thought that the essential strength of the companies lay in their ability to recruit younger sons of the nobility, owing to French customs of primogeniture; anyway, they were "... reckoned the best soldiers in the world..."⁷.

During those same Estates-General of 1484, the Chancellor of France gave expression to the official view of the army: it was the "right arm" of the body politic and lent "majesty and royal splendour" to the prince; at once a comfort to the King and his realm and a deterrent to their enemies⁸. Yet, how much authority did the King exercise over his own army? We have seen how the nobility of France was recruited into royal service during the fifteenth century, and how its members clamoured for positions and favours - but to what purpose, to serve the Crown or themselves? In 1484, the Chancellor said that the fact that Charles VIII was a minor made a strong army

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6. Solon, "Popular response to standing military forces", in Studies in the Renaissance, vol. xix, pp. 103-4.
 7. Machiavelli, "Sketch of France", in Works, tr. Farnsworth, vol. ii, p. 495.
 8. Masselin, op.cit., p. 335.

all the more necessary. In view of the involvement of royal troops in the strife of the next few years, we may doubt the wisdom of his words. The loyalty of the companies in Italy will be studied in a later chapter. But first it might be useful to look at the personnel of Gascon companies in some detail, to enquire how tightly the rank-and-file were tied to their captains.

The King was entitled to appoint captains as he pleased. At the beginning of his reign, Louis XI had sacked two-thirds of his father's commanders, to replace them with his own men. Subsequently, however, he came to regard his drastic action as one of the major causes of the League and War of the Public Good. The men Louis had cashiered had signed up for the Duke of Brittany and Charles of France, in opposition to the Crown⁹. Certainly, one of the aims of the leaguers was to regain control of the *compagnies d'ordonnance*¹⁰. But although Louis was forced to re-establish some of his father's old servants as a result of the opposition, he retained a free hand in appointments for the rest of his reign - of forty-three captains in 1483, only seven had served for ten years or more¹¹. The nobles' claim of 1484, to be

9. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société, pp. 406-7.

10. Ibid., p. 426.

11. Ibid., pp. 408-10.

preferred before foreigners to army commands, reflects Louis XI's obstinately self-centred policy, and the frustration caused by it. On the other hand, in reaction to Louis' ideas, the Beaujeu regency at first retained a maximum number of captains (although the size of their companies was cut down) including amongst them the greatest princes of the land - Orléans, Lorraine, Beaujeu, Albret, Angoulême, Dunois. Yet, as a result of the involvement of numbers of these men in the Guerre Folle, the Government was not afraid to dispose of such rebels; between 1486 and 1490, thirty per cent of the captains of the Ordonnance were dismissed¹².

Alain d'Albret was one of those who lost his company in this way. Until his rebellion, he had not scrupled to make use of it in his own affairs, such as the Foix succession War¹³. On the other hand, in 1485, the 100 lance Albret company descended upon the captain's county of Gaure, announcing that it would remain there until paid by Alain. In the event, the main town, Fleurance, was besieged for a week, taken, and occupied

12. Ibid., pp. 410-11.

13. Luchaire, Alain le grand, p.74. Albret's company was used for private war as late as 1492, when it helped capture Alain's rebellious town of Fleurance, capital of Gaure, Viala, Le Parlement de Toulouse, vol. ii, p. 78.

and ransacked for six months¹⁴. In other words, both Albret and his gendarmes held the captain to be something of a proprietor of his troop, even though the Crown was in fact responsible for paying wages. So far, this ambivalence of loyalties had not been tested, but when Albret joined the league of princes of 1486, in opposition to the Crown, the members of his company faced the contradiction squarely and they were required to make a political decision. During the course of 1487, Albret made two vain attempts to reach Brittany, the centre of the coalition, and reinforce the league with his troops. His compagnie d'ordonnance, under the effective command of its lieutenant, Raymond de Cardailhac, seigneur de St. Cirq-Lapopie in Quercy, was not, it seems, involved in these attempts to run the gauntlet between Gascony and Nantes. It was evidently stationed elsewhere, outside Alain's control. However, as Charles VIII wrote in February 1488, Albret had "... used such persuasion by means of letters and messages, that the said seigneur de St. Cirq and several others of the company had abandoned (royal) service, notwithstanding their oaths sworn to (the King), nor the wages they had received, and had

14. Luchaire, op.cit., p.144.

gone over to the said rebels...¹⁵". It is not clear exactly what proportion of the company defected, though it was certainly large. Some, perhaps most of the defectors were posted to Châteaubriant, which was besieged by the royal army for a week until it yielded on terms on 23rd April 1488. Thirty or thirty-five men-at-arms of the garrison, instead of marching away according to the surrender terms, asked to be forgiven and reinstated. They seem to have claimed to have had misgivings, at least, about the treachery of the company. The King was inclined to believe that they were largely innocent of deceit, and he pardoned them. He did not, however, trust them sufficiently to allow them to remain in camp, "... fearing that some of them, or their men, could pass information to the other side...", and they were dispatched to Picardy. This was a wise move. The men of Albret's company who surrendered Châteaubriant were unpaid and hungry - their loyalty to the King might have lasted only until these conditions were remedied.¹⁶

15. Lettres de Charles VIII, ed. P. Pélicier and B. de Mandrot, vol. i, pp. 289-92. Another royal letter suggests that the whole company deserted, ibid., ii, p.27. Exactly when Albret was deprived of his captaincy is not clear; Luchaire indicates that he had lost command by 1486, op.cit., p. 73, n.2; but it is evident from Charles VIII's correspondence that Albret was still a captain of the Ordonnance in 1487, though not by early 1488, Lettres, i, p.291.

16. ibid., ii, pp. 17-19, 6 and 30, respectively.

Later in the year, more gendarmes either deserted Albret or were captured. In early May, Charles VIII announced that twenty or twenty-five men-at-arms, recently come from Brittany, were to be put under the command of Aymar de Prie, seigneur de St. André.¹⁷ In July, the King revealed that more men of the Albret company had been captured, including one called Pierre de Buffière, whose life was to be spared, through the intercession of Anne de Beaujeu; but he was to remain in custody¹⁸. The other captives, by implication, were destined for execution. However, it appears that most of the rebel gendarmes of Albret's company escaped charges of treason, by surrendering voluntarily and begging to be reinstated. It is difficult to know how many, if any, had had genuine reservations about following their captain into rebellion. Obviously we cannot trust their loyal claims made upon surrender. The Crown was under no illusions. The loyalty of its army, it realised only too well, depended in large measure upon the treatment it received. The best defence against desertion was regular payment: the Marshal de Gié, who was to have charge of some of Albret's men in Picardy, "... would have them well treated and would be able to ensure that

17. Ibid., ii, pp. 32-3.

18. Ibid., ii, pp. 181-2.

there would be no fault in their payment¹⁹."

Alain d'Albret was reappointed captain of 100 lances in 1491, when he made his peace with Charles VIII. This reinstatement was part of Albret's remarkable return from rebellion in Brittany, that has been discussed in the previous chapter. However, the favourable dénouement of Alain's crisis with the monarchy could not disguise the fact that, when put to the test, his compagnie d'ordonnance had failed him - apart from a few trusted hands, its members could not be relied upon. Most had deserted Albret's cause (or been captured, as we have seen) even before the battle of St. Aubin-du-Cormier. The Breton crisis proved to be a watershed in the relations between Alain d'Albret and his company, as in so many other fields. From now on, the troop of horse which bore Albret's name gradually parted company with its captain. It had been halved in size by 1495²⁰, although

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19. Ibid., ii, p.18. This emphasis on prompt payment is apparent in an earlier letter as well, ibid., ii, p.6; and in a piece by Malet de Graville, in Correspondance de Charles VIII et de ses conseillers avec Louis II de la Trémoille, ed. Louis de la Trémoille (Paris, 1875), pp. 72-3.
20. B.N., p.o.25, no. 218. This document clearly shows that Alain had a company of only 50 lances throughout 1495. The information given by H. de L'Epinois, putting its strength at 55 lances, is therefore incorrect, "Notes extraites des Archives Communales de Compiègne", in B.E.C., vol. xxv (1864), pp. 124-61; p.138. Luchaire, on the other hand, notes that Albret had 150 lances in 1495, op.cit., p.73, n.2, and p.75. These were, in fact, 150 lances "à la petite paye", troops raised to defend the frontier of Languedoc, and not the same as Alain's regular company. B.N., p.o. 25, no.220. Luchaire's figures for Albret company strength, as for the size of his pension, should be treated with caution.

Albret hung on as captain until, by 1509, his company had passed, seemingly without hiatus, into the hands of Jean de Durfort, lieutenant since at least 1503²¹.

Despite the change of command, only seven gendarmes present at a muster at Parma in June 1507 (the last surviving review roll of Albret's company), fail to appear at the Crema muster, over two years later, at which Durfort is first signalled as captain.²² Apparently, the displacement of Albret as captain caused no significant dislocation of personnel. The troop was quite simply inherited by its lieutenant. After all, Albret had relinquished effective command long before 1509. His company had seen a good deal of service in Italy, but he himself never ventured there. It is doubtful whether his company was of any more use or interest to Alain, by the time of Durfort's takeover, than as a source of income - something of a change from the 1480s. The ties between Alain d'Albret and his compagnie d'ordonnance, eroded over many years, were finally cut altogether by Louis XII; the man who had bargained with Charles VIII for massive favours in 1491, was ignominiously sacked, not two decades later,

21. B.N., Clair. 158, no. 80, and 241, no. 639; B.N., fr. 21506, no. 728. Luchaire observes that Albret had lost his company by 1508, *op.cit.*, p. 73, n.2. From 1512, Luchaire continues, Alain was only a 'nominal' company captain, *ibid.*, p. 75. However, after 1508, Albret seems to have been permanently dismissed from the regular army; it is certain that he never recovered command of his original company - the Durfort company.

22. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 780; B.N., Clair. 241, no. 639. Only 47 gendarmes, out of a maximum of 50, mustered in 1507, however.

simply because the King did not care for him. Nor were Albret's sons provided with army commands, until in 1512 Jean was appointed a captain, during the great expansion of the army that year.

If Alain d'Albret, the most powerful Gascon of our period, had lost effective control of his company by the first decade of the sixteenth century, it should not surprise us to find lesser men holding no greater claims to proprietorship of their troops by this time. Whatever authority a captain exercised over his gendarmes on a day-to-day basis, the King retained the ultimate sanction, as employer and paymaster of both commander and rank-and-file. When drawing up his will, Jean de Foix-Narbonne felt obliged to ask Louis XII to allow his son Gaston to inherit his company²³. The succession was no foregone conclusion (although Gaston did in fact inherit). The Foix company, which was acquired by its lieutenant, Roger de Béarn, after Gaston's death in 1512, at a strength of 100 lances, was cut down to 50 lances by 1517²⁴, and following Béarn's death the following year, the company was split up and its personnel divided between Odet de Lautrec and Anne de Montmorency²⁵. A company could not simply be handed over to a relative, like so much property. Although the fate of Durfort's company

23. Boucher de Molandon, "Le testament de Jean de Foix", in Bulletin historique et philologique (1885), p.35.

24. B.N., Clair. 244, no. 789; B.N. p.o. 237 (dossier Béarn), no. 17.

25. B.N., Clair. 244, no. 801.

after his death is uncertain²⁶, we have seen already how Gratien d'Agnerre's unit was acquired by Louis de Hangest, rather than by Gratien's son and lieutenant, Jean²⁷.

It was this company which Aguerre no doubt employed in his war with Metz in 1489, in league with the Duke of Lorraine, his old patron²⁸. In somewhat similar vein, Odet Aydie le Jeune was quietly relieved of his small company of gendarmes soon after its return from Charles VIII's expedition to Naples, and henceforth was to devote himself to the profession of captain of foot. Yet it was this man who in 1487 had defended the castle of Blaye against a royal army, on behalf of his more illustrious brother and namesake, the Lord of Lescun, presumably using troops normally retained by the Crown for the purpose²⁹.

In short, despite some evidence of the use of compagnies d'ordonnance as private armies by Gascon noblemen in the years before the Italian Wars, it is clear that by the sixteenth century the destinies of companies - the issue of their leadership, size, or indeed existence at all - lay firmly in royal hands. Gendarmes had become part of one large corps of cavalry, whose members could be shuffled between units without difficulty. The majority of soldiers did not maintain ties with their

26. By 1517 this company was down to a strength of 30 lances, B.N., n .a.fr 1481, no.73; B.N.,clair.243,no.781.

27. B.N., fr.21510,no.946; Jaurgain, "Profils basques", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, vol. iv, pp. 145-6.

28. ibid., p. 39.

Jaurgain,

29. B.N.,fr. 25717,no.207;/ Deux comtes de Comminges, pp. 145-6. Aydie's and Lescun's men at Blaye deserted to the Crown, during the siege of the place.

captain which were strong enough to prevent movement from company to company. The continuity of service of most of the men-at-arms of the Albret company through the Durfort take over has been noted above. It suggests, at the very least, that the claims of Alain d'Albret on the services of most of the men of his company took second place to the claims of the King. In more general terms, it may be useful to look at the rates of turnover in personnel of companies, to establish at least one aspect of the link between captain and gendarme - the length of service in the same unit.

Contamine has calculated the average rates of turnover in personnel, within a given company, for certain periods of the fifteenth century³⁰. He has found that

30. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 470-1 (for gendarmes) and 461-2 (archers). The author bases his calculations on the number of new men - men from outside a given company - who appear in the ranks between two dates. Since promotions from archer to gendarme were much more frequent than movements in the other direction (demotions being, in fact, very rare indeed), a proportion of gendarme replacements would usually be promotees, whilst, almost always, every new archer would be from outside the company in question. Hence, rates of replacement for archers are higher, for this reason, than those for gendarmes (besides being generally higher anyway), and, correspondingly, average career-lengths for archers are artificially low - the time spent as archer by a gendarme is incorporated into gendarme careers, in Contamine's formula, but not the time spent as gendarme by an archer into archer careers. Does Contamine take account of this when he concludes that, on average, men-at-arms' careers in a given unit were about 20% longer than archers' careers, ibid., p. 471? Contamine's formula has been followed in the analysis of Gascon companies, in the interests of comparison, but it should be remembered that so-called career-lengths are rather statistical devices than meaningful indications of how long a soldier could expect to stay in a given company in reality.

the average annual replacement rate in the compagnies d'ordonnance in his survey, between 1451 and 1461, was 3% for gendarmes and 5% for archers; between 1469/70 and 1475 the rates had risen to 9% and 13% respectively; whilst from 1487 to 1492 the gendarme proportion stood at 8%, with that of archers at 11%, for roughly the equivalent time span. If these figures are converted into average career-lengths within one company, or, in other words, the time it would take a given company to replace its personnel entirely, based upon the rates of replacement quoted above, they appear perhaps more meaningful. In the case of gendarmes, the average length of career (including time spent as an archer in the same company where applicable) drops from 33 years down to 11, before rising slightly to 12.5 years; this pattern is mirrored by the archers, whose career-lengths (excluding time spent as gendarme in the same company) begin at 20 years and plummet to 7.5, before rising again to 9 years. In short, the relative stability of service of the gendarmerie under Charles VII is undermined under his successors, by casualties of war certainly, but also by the increased turnover amongst captains, and probably by a rise in the number of dismissals from the ranks after about 1470, when royal supervision of the army was tightened up.³¹ The strong ties which were no doubt formed between captain and

31. Ibid., p. 462.

men under the stable conditions of the 1450s, when the relative integrity of a company was assured for years, must surely have been weakened later on.

This insecurity of career under Louis XI and during the early years of Charles VIII continues into the period of the Italian Wars, at least in the case of the Gascon troops under scrutiny in this study. The average annual replacement rate amongst gendarmes of the Aguerre company between 1493 and 1499 is 7% (career-length 14 years); amongst archers the rate is 11% (career-length 9 years). In the period 1509 to 1515, 5% of the gendarmerie of the Durfort company are replaced on average each year, from outside the unit (career-length 20 years) whilst the rate for archers is 9.5% (11 years). The Foix-Béarn company, over a similar span, 1510 to 1515, reveals a gendarme rate of 13.5% (career-length 7.5 years) and a rate for archers of 15% (7 years). Turning to Aguerre's company in the first decade of the sixteenth century however, the picture is somewhat different. Never again employed in Italy after its return from Charles VIII's Neapolitan venture, this unit was, it seems, continuously stationed on the comparatively peaceful borders of Champagne throughout these ten years. The average annual turnover rate amongst the Aguerre company's gendarmes between 1499 and 1510 was 3% (career-length 33 years), with that of the archers at 5.5% (18 years). It would

seem reasonable to adduce the peaceful conditions of service of this unit as the major cause of the remarkable stability among its personnel during this time, although the particular capacity of the Aguerre company to find new gendarmes from within the ranks of its own archers also contributes to the low gendarme replacement rate. War service, and especially war service abroad, no doubt undermined the solidarity of a company, not only through casualties suffered (which will be examined below) but also through the inevitable resignations, transfers, perhaps even desertions, which must have followed in the wake of the upheaval of change from garrison life at home to campaigning in Italy. The contrast should be qualified - army life in the peninsula very quickly settled into a garrison routine in most places for much of the time. But when a harsh campaign is confronted, rates of replacement in the ranks rise sharply. Both the Albret and Foix companies fought in the Garigliano battle of the winter 1503-4. Between 1503 and 1505, the average annual turnover rate for gendarmes was 30 and 26% respectively, for archers 35 and 29%.³²

32. There seems to be no doubt that archer turnover was usually higher than that of gendarmes. However, the difference is lessened if we add the time spent as gendarmes by archers to our archer career calculations, which Contamine does not:-

<u>Company</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Annual Rate of Turnover</u>	<u>Career-Length</u>
Aguerre	1493-99	10%	10 years
Durfort-	1509-15	8%	12.5 years
Duras			
Foix/Béarn	1510-15	15%	7 "
Aguerre	1499-1510	4%	25 "
Albret	1503-5	35%	3 "
Foix	1503-5	27%	4 "

In conclusion, it might be argued that service in Italy helped to weaken ties between captain and rank-and-file. In the case of Alain d'Albret, his company was removed from his influence, when in Italy, simply by means of geographical separation, as we have seen. And to some extent this trend must have applied to almost all companies. Rare was the captain who spent as much time in Italy as the men under his command. Furthermore, ties were weakened by accelerated turnover in personnel, as a result of campaigning abroad. Only one of the fifty gendarmes of the Foix company of 1510 survived from 1493; only one out of fifty in the Albret-Duras company in 1509 was a veteran of sixteen years before. Six out of forty-nine men-at-arms of the Aguerre company of 1510 survived from 1493.

Movements of soldiers from one company to another were frequent, and although the motives for such transfers are almost always mysterious, the moves themselves can be documented through a laborious investigation of muster rolls. Some work along these lines was published by Jaurgain, based on the personnel of Gratien d'Aguerre's company³³. The fifty men-at-arms of this troop were reviewed at Vitry-en-Partois in April 1493. Jaurgain found nine of these men in other compagnies d'ordonnance during the lifetime of the Aguerre company - four moved on to the Baudricourt company, quite soon after the Vitry

33. Jaurgain, "Profils basques", pp. 41-8.

muster, from which unit, incidentally, one of them had just transferred to Aguerre's troop anyway; four others soon moved on to various other companies, including those of Foix and Armagnac, although one later returned to Gratien's company; the last gendarme was a former member of a different unit. All these moves - and some of these men did not cease to change after just one transfer - took place at the level of man-at-arms. In other words, they were not obvious promotions. Such transfers can be documented amongst Gratien's archers too, although here we can no doubt adduce the desire for promotion to gendarme as a motive at times. It is probable that one Petry d'Ansa, an archer of Aguerre in 1493, who subsequently became an archer in a different company, was enticed back to his old unit by the promise, or chance, of promotion - by 1499 he is a man-at-arms. More commonly, however, the departing archer is on his way to fill an equivalent post elsewhere.

Soldiers also transferred to posts outside the army. More lucrative positions in the royal household and in the provinces beckoned experienced men in the ranks. Odet de Verduzan left the Albret company in 1499 and by 1502 he was captain of Dax castle, which he held throughout our period, till 1520 at least³⁴. At first sight this

34. B.N., p.o. 2964 (dossier Verdusan), nos. 5-9; B.N., Clair.111, no. 134.

seems like a poor exchange, for the salary of 100 livres a year at Dax was less than a gendarme's wages. On the other hand, no doubt the job of castellan involved fewer expenses and fewer risks. Besides, there was always the chance of additional employment at Court - by 1515 Verduzan was one of the hundred gentlemen of the household³⁵. Here the pay was over twice as lucrative as in the gendarmerie. Perhaps Gilles de Nocaise, who joined the gentlemen in June 1512, at the salary of 390 livres per year, is the same man as Captain Nocaise, who served in the Foix company until 1510 at least³⁶. Pierre de Lur left the Albret company sometime in 1502-3; by 1515 he was captain of St. Sever and a gentleman of the royal household³⁷. Monseigneur d'Andouins, who served as lieutenant in the Foix company in 1492-3, also seems to have been one of those who left for more profitable employment, as a captain of foot with an annual pension of 400 livres³⁸. Le Basque de Tardes, one of eleven royal écuyers d'écurie by 1511-12, at 400 livres per annum,³⁹ served in the Foix company in 1492-3, leaving before the

35. G.R., no. 13967.

36. A.N., K.502, no.5.

37. G.R., no. 13980. St. Sever was worth 100 livres tournois per annum.

38. B.N., Clair, 244, no. 33.

39. B.N., fr. 9501, fol. 315.

turn of the century⁴⁰. Of course, it was possible to combine office-holding with service in the gendarmerie, but this seems to have been rare, except amongst captains and lieutenants, who both stood to reap far more financial reward from their positions than did a simple gendarme. To remain in the Ordonnances and hold down a job in local government would require the employment of a lieutenant in the latter post - profits would be small, the only benefit prestige.

Even if a captain of the Ordonnance managed to retain his command for years therefore, the composition of his company would have undergone continual change; in other words, continual erosion of its solidarity. But how much authority did a captain exercise over his men, thus impermanently under his command? Royal ordinances dealing with the army reflect the struggle for power between King and captains. For his part, Louis XI attempted to initiate radical changes in 1476, by introducing a revised system of recruitment: from now on, the King was to raise new gendarmes for a given unit from amongst the archers of the same company, although the captains were left to select the latter, preferably from the pool of valets; subject archers, archers who served as retainers to a man-at-arms, and whose pay went straight to him, were abolished. The reform was not popular, although it did aid the cause of archer promotion

40. Two men-at-arms called Tardes, Pierre and Jehannot, served in the Foix company at the same time, but the former seems more likely to have been the man who became an écuyer d'écurie - see Maulde's note in *Auton*, vol.1, p.44, n.1.

temporarily, and an ordinance of 1484 authorised a return to recruitment by captains and the institution of subject archers⁴¹. But the powers of the captain continued to be severely circumscribed. On the one hand, the King could always intervene in recruitment matters if he wished; reviewers could reject men at muster⁴²; and from 1484 captains were forbidden to dismiss any troop on their own authority - this was the task of the commissioners of war and the marshals⁴³. On the other hand, the competence of the marshals' provosts, in judicial matters, increased as the fifteenth century progressed, at the expense of both the civil authorities and the captains⁴⁴. One of the first legislative acts of Francis I was his army ordinance of January 1515, which gives us a view of the relative balance of powers by the end of our period. On the whole, the clauses of the act try to strengthen the ties between captain and troops, in the interests of military discipline: soldiers might only change company with their captain's permission; vacancies in the ranks caused by death were

41. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société, pp. 468-9.

42. In 1492, it was stipulated that new recruits might only join a company at review-time, ibid., p. 489, This law seems to have remained something of a dead letter, judging by the number of soldiers entered on muster-lists who had received payment for less than one quarter-year, and had therefore enlisted between reviews.

43. Ibid., pp. 489-93.

44. Ibid., pp. 517-8.

to be filled by captains; all members of the company, down to page, were to wear their captain's livery. The 1515 ordinance also tried to ensure that captains reside with their company for at least part of the year, that they obtain consent to leave garrison, and that they employ experienced men as lieutenants, one of whose roles was the policing of the company⁴⁵. Was the Crown's authority over its captains now so secure that, far from attempting to undermine the proprietorial nature of his command, as in the days of Louis XI, it was primarily concerned to underpin the captain's power and encourage his sense of responsibility for his company?

It is clear that by 1515 the Monarchy no longer felt threatened by dangerously divided loyalties within its army. The embarrassment of noble abuse of troops in royal pay had been overcome. The major interest was now to fashion the as yet still imperfect instrument into a finer tool of policy - in other words, to enforce stricter

45. Ordonnances des rois de France: règne de François Ier vol. i (Paris, 1902), no. 17. Absenteeism of captains was a problem in the fifteenth century and an ordinance of 1486 attempted to ensure that captains reside with their company, Contamine, op.cit., p.436. It is perhaps unwise to assume that captains were necessarily present at muster if their name appears on the list, as Contamine apparently does, ibid., p.437. Alain d'Albret regularly appears on the lists of his unit's reviews in Italy, whilst Gaston de Foix is present in all muster-lists of his company, even when he cannot have been present - although his case is admittedly exceptional, since he became a captain of the Ordonnance when only a child.

discipline in the ranks, through the agency of the Crown's executives, particularly the captains of the Ordonnance. The complaint of Gaguin's gendarme (circa. 1490) that he is "subject and serf to the will and bidding of the captain who has power over him,"⁴⁶ is hardly an expression of devotion to a lord and benefactor. On the contrary, it roughly reflects the control which the Crown itself attempts to enforce in the decrees of 1515. Contemporaries seem to have been in little doubt who was really in charge by our period. The anonymous historian of Charles VIII describes the gendarmes of the Ordonnance as "... nobles all, and subjects of the King, chosen, dismissed and paid by him alone, and not by the captains, as in Italy."⁴⁷ In almost every particular this contemporary statement is imperfect, for not all gendarmes were noble, nor royal subjects, and the captains were responsible for recruitment - it could be no other way, despite the determination of Louis XII, at the start of his reign, to assume this function⁴⁸, for decentralised recruitment was far more efficient. Besides, some gendarmes at least received financial or material rewards,

46. R. Gaguin, "Le débat du laboureur, du prestre et du gendarme", in Epistole et Orationes, ed. L. Thuasne, vol. ii (Paris, 1904), pp. 350-66; p. 360.

47. B.N., fr. 17519, fol. 117.

48. Diarii, ii, col. 764.

if not wages or pensions from their captain. And can we really believe that no gendarme was expelled from the ranks on the authority of the captain alone? However, despite its over-generalisation, the statement is fundamentally correct. As an institution of state, the Ordonnances of the King of France were the finest troops in Western Europe - no other army could match them in serviceability and amenability to royal control; their organisation had been copied in Brittany and Burgundy during the later fifteenth century, as they presented for contemporaries the best model army that could be devised⁴⁹.

In short, it does not appear that the conclusions of some modern historians on the respective influence of captain and king in the army can be sustained, at least as far as our period is concerned. Zeller, for example, claimed that captains were virtual proprietors of their companies⁵⁰. Russell Major insists that the first loyalty of the gendarmerie was to their captain, and cites the wearing of his livery as evidence of this overriding bond⁵¹. However, we have seen that in 1515 the Crown itself encouraged company livery in the interests of discipline and control. To maintain, as Russell Major

49. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 502-4 and 541-2.

50. G. Zeller, Les institutions de la France au xvie. siècle (Paris, 1948), p. 316.

51. Russell Major, "The Crown and the aristocracy", in American Historical Review, vol. lxix, p. 640.

does, that the standing army was "... but a small step forward from the feudal levies of the Middle Ages..."⁵² seems somewhat ungenerous. The process of transformation from feudal to royal army was gradual, but nonetheless radical for that. We can perhaps take two dates as useful symbols of the beginning and culmination of the change, although, of course, the evolutionary course of royal control of the nation's main forces cannot be strictly confined between the two. The first is 1439, when Rodrigo de Villandrando left France, recognising that the institution of the Ordonnances weakened the authority and status of the independent captain⁵³. The second is 1490, by which date the majority of the princes of the realm had become permanent captains of individual companies, and to that extent had truly entered royal service. In 1445, such men had been loath to accept command of as small a division as one company, preferring to lead a group of companies as a superior commander⁵⁴. Brantôme claimed that a captaincy was not granted to a man out of favouritism or because of his high social rank⁵⁵, but of course it

52. Russell Major, Representative institutions, p.9. Russell Major does point out, however, that royal ordinances encouraged the use of the captain's livery or device by companies, as a disciplinary measure, "The Crown and the aristocracy", loc. cit.

53. Solon, "Popular response to standing military forces", p.92.

54. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 426-7.

55. Brantôme, Oeuvres, iii, p. 150.

often was - Gaston de Foix became a captain of the Ordonnance when only eleven years old, in 1500. Yet, appointments of princes to captaincies were not so much an admission of weakness on the Crown's part, as a triumph of assimilation of the greatest subjects in the realm to their new role as illustrious subordinates of the King.

Despite the relative strictness of royal control, however, there was still room for the captain to infuse his company with his own character. Indeed, we have seen the Crown itself encourage this trend. Units varied in the degree to which their captain's identity was displayed in their ranks, according to their history and his interest in the company, but none can have utterly escaped their captain's influence. This is most obvious in the question of geographical bias - a brief glance at the muster rolls of Gascon companies is sufficient to reveal it. Indeed, this tendency was so evident that a Venetian informant in 1511 noted that the soldiers of Durfort's company were "all Gascons⁵⁶".

The analysis of geographical origin of names in muster lists presents many problems. Apart from the difficulties afforded by the state of the manuscripts themselves and the lack of a standard spelling of many names, there is the problem of geographical identification itself. Many towns, villages and castles in France share a common name with one or more other settlements.

56. Diarii, xiii, col. 245.

Besides, there is no guarantee that a man actually lives in the place from which he derives his family name.

The Foix and Albret families are interesting examples: by our period, the main line of the Foix was established in Navarre, and their capital was Pamplona, hundreds of miles from Foix itself; as for the Albret, they had by our time largely discarded Albret, or Labrit, for the greater attractions of Nérac, Casteljaloux, and later Pau. Other difficulties also arise, such as non-geographical names, like nicknames, or, quite simply, untraceable locations. Nevertheless, with a sufficiently large sample a generally valid pattern of geographical bias can be drawn.⁵⁷

At the beginning of our period, the Foix company was heavily populated by gendarmes from that part of France now incorporated within the boundaries of the

57. The following sources have been used in the preparation of the geographical analysis: P. Joanne, Dictionnaire géographique et administratif de la France, 7 vols. (Paris, 1890-1905); P. Raymond, Dictionnaire topographique du département des Basses-Pyrénées (Paris, 1863); le Vicomte de Gourgues, Dictionnaire topographique du département de la Dordogne (Paris, 1873); a map of the Gouvernement Général de Guienne et Guascogne, publ. by N. Sanson d'Abbeville (1679); Michelin map series, scale 1/200,000; Institut Géographique National series of Cartes Touristiques, scale 1/100,000; details of the Estates and composition of Béarn and related lands (later sixteenth century), in B.N., cabinet d'Hozier 32 (dossier Béarn), pp. 52-76.

département of Pyrénées-Atlantiques. Jean de Foix-Narbonne himself was Béarnese by birth and upbringing, although his major possessions included the county of Etampes, south of Paris, and the viscounty of Narbonne, in Languedoc. Foix, then, recruited compatriots, but rarely neighbours or vassals. On the contrary, the Béarnese and Navarrese gendarmes of the Foix company were, ironically enough, the subjects of Jean's great rivals, Catherine de Foix and Jean d'Albret, Kings of Navarre and sovereigns of Béarn. The sixty men-at-arms of the Foix-Narbonne company mustered at Lisieux in August 1492⁵⁸; eighteen names are definitely Béarnese or Basque; another nine are probably Béarnese, and many of the remainder are Gascon⁵⁹. Over 10% of the gendarme complement is Basque.

58. B.N., Clair.238, no. 361.

59. Béarnese: Andoins, Sus, Béarn, Gan, Pontaut, Pontec, Casemajor, Loubix, La Mousqué, Lescun, Lussagnet.

Navarrese: Gramont, Echaux, Masparraute.

Other Basques: Tardes x 2, Laxague, Palaitz.

Probable Béarnese: Nogaret (Nogaro?), St. Vic (St. Abit?), Cassagnes (Cassaigne?), Barrault x 2 (Barranté?), Ste. Colombe x 2 (Ste. Colomme?), St. Laurens (St. Laurent?), Moniquet (Méniquet?)

Gascons: Foix, La Plume, Caupenne, Luppé, Nestier, Castelbajac, Merville, La Marque, Arcamont, Estang, Comminges, Aure, Binos, St. Elix, La Mazère.

Guiennois: Esquirol x 2.

Languedociens: Villemur, Segréville, La Bruguière.

Other southwesterners: La Mote, Montpezat.

The most common reason for the inclusion of a name under the heading 'Probable Béarnese', rather than 'Béarnese', even when the name in question closely resembles, or is indeed identical to a town on the map, is the existence of other settlements

By 1499, and the time of the first Lombard campaign, this Béarnese-Basque weighting has increased. Fifty gendarmes mustered in Lombardy at the end of October⁶⁰; almost half the unit, twenty-two men, have Béarnese or Basque names, and another seven are probably in the same category. Another ten men are certain Gascons⁶¹. At least 22% of the complement is Basque by this stage. But the review of June 1503, at Plaisance⁶², marks the high-point of far-

59. Cont/...

of the same or similar name elsewhere in France. These other settlements are, however, usually to be found in the south-west of the country. 'Gascon' is defined here on lying to the south and west of the Garonne-Ariège line (in other words, the area of Gascon-French speech today). 'Guiennois' come from the region to the north of this divide (those parts of Bordelais, Bazadais and Agenais north of the Garonne, plus Quercy, Périgord and Limousin), whilst 'Languedociens' originate from the area to the east (Rouergne, Albigeois, Toulousain and Foix, east of the Ariège). Names put under the heading of 'Other southwesterners' are generally those which are common throughout these regions.

60. B.N.,n.a. fr. 8612, fol. 33.

61. Béarnese: Béarn, Lescun, Gan, Sanguinados, Gurs, Araux, Ponteac, Casemajor, Fanget, Gabaston.

Navarrese: Licérasse, Gramont x 2, Aguerre, Uhart, Masparrante x 4, Echaux, Alfaro

Other Basque: Domezain

Probables: Barrault, St. Abit, Maisonnave, Lannebraz (Lannegrasse?), Marie (Maria?↑), Ste. Colombe, St. Laurens.

Gascons: Foix, Luppé, La Plume, Bazillac, Lannecanne, St. Elix, Mauléon, La Marque, Saurat, Merville.

Languedociens: Lautrec, Fendeille, Segréville, Toulouse,

62. B.N., fr. 21506, no. 720. La Bruguière.

western Pyrenean dominance in the Foix company, as far as its history is told in muster rolls - no less than half the gendarme complement, twenty-six soldiers, are now Béarnese or Basque, with three more probables; a half-dozen or so more men can be identified as Gascons⁶³.

At least 20% of company strength in Basque, at gendarme level. This regional bias declines somewhat with the last two reviews studied. In February 1506⁶⁴ only fifteen of fifty names, and one probable, fall into the Pyrénées-Atlantiques group; a few more Gascons and other south-westerners can be identified⁶⁵, but by now the

63. Béarnese: Béarn, Fanget, Gabaston x 2, Lescun, Le Lion, Arros x 2, Arbouet, Sanguinados, Ara x-le Basque, Gurs, Aydie, Anescat, Casemajor, Gayrosse.
Navarrese: La Carre, Masparante x 4, Aguerre, Uhart, Echaux, Gramont, Alfaro.
Probables: Maisonnave, Lannebraz, St. Abit.
Gascons: Foix, Luppé, La Marque, Lannecanne, Saurat
Guiennois: Esquirol x 2.
Other southwesterner: Bernet.
 We would of course expect the Béarnese bias of the Foix company to be kept up by its effective commander from 1500, Roger de Béarn, Foix's lieutenant.
64. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 765.
65. Béarnese: Béarn x 2, Fanget, Le Lion, Aydie, Anescat, Arros, Gabaston, Sanguinados.
Navarrese: La Carre, Echaux, Aguerre, Masparraute, Arbide.
Other Basque: Domezain.
Probables: Puyau (Puyoo?)
Gascons: Foix, Bazillac, Mascaron, Benesse.
Guiennois: Esquirol, Carles.
Languedocien: Mirepoix
Other southwesterners: Bernet, La Mothe.

recruitment net seems to have been spread more widely - we can find a Fleming, one, perhaps two Germans, Italians, and maybe more non-French troops. The Basque proportion has dropped back to 12 %. These 1506 results are mirrored in the last Foix company muster, of March 1510⁶⁶:

fourteen names are Béarnese or Basque, plus three probables, and there is a clutch of definite Gascons⁶⁷. Again there is a sprinkling of foreigners.

When we turn to the Albret company, the emphasis shifts northwards, away from the Pyrenees towards the heartland of Gascony, particularly the area now included within the borders of the département of Gers. Forty-nine gendarmes were reviewed at Castres in June 1498⁶⁸: some fifteen names fall into the region between the

66. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 814.

67. Béarnese: Béarn, Fanget, Gan, Anescat x 2, Le Lion, Lubieng, Sanguinados.
Navarrese: Le Carre, Licérasse, Masparraute.
Other Basques: Laxague, Urtebie, Athac.
Probables: Esteven, Garrou (Garroa?), Poyau (Puyoo?).
Gascons: Foix, Bazillac, Comminges, Benesse, Arblade, Luppé, Mascaron, Coussan, La Borde.
Languedociens: Ambres, Rennes
Other southwesterners: La Mothe, Laroque x 2.

68. B.N., fr. 21504, no. 607.

Pyrenean départements and the Garonne river; most of the remainder are south-western names, a few from Albret's territories north of the Garonne, Périgord and Limousin⁶⁹. The muster at Asti of February 1502⁷⁰ reveals a roughly similar distribution - twelve to fourteen names from the area centred on Gers, and a smattering of men from Périgord, Quercy, and the Pyrenees⁷¹. In the muster at Parma in July 1505,⁷² of only forty-two men-at-arms, we have ten to eleven names from the major region and small

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69. Heartland Gascons: Albret, Armagnac x 2, Caupenne, Gabarret, Puypardin, Bezolles x 3, Polastron, Caussens, Puydraguin, Sérillac, Espagnet, Verduzan.

Probables: Roquetaillade, Arques.

Béarnese and Basques: Béarn, Espellete, Laxague.

Bigorran: Aure.

Guiennois: Cardaillac, Montbeton, Boissières, Ambazac, St. Chamassy, St. Chamant, Marqueyssac, Sermet.

Other southwesterners: Labat, Castres, Cassaignes, La Barte, La Mote, Durfort, La Faurie, Rabastens, Roydde.

70. B.N., fr. 25783, no. 41.

71. Heartland Gascons: Albret, Armagnac, Caupenne, Bezolles x 2, Gabarret, Polastron, Espagnet, Stuc, Tartas, Sérillac.

Probables: Roquetaillade, Arques.

Béarnese and Basques: Béarn, Espellete, Coarraze, Laxague.

Bigorran: Aure.

Guiennois: Cardaillac, Villemade, Montbeton, Espinas, Ambazac, St. Chamassy, Marqueyssac, Sermet.

Other southwesterners: Durfort x 2, La Mote, La Hitte, Roydde, Labat, La Faurie.

72. B.N., fr. 25784, no. 82.

contributions from the lands north of the Garonne⁷³.

Between 1505 and the next review in the survey, at Crema in August 1509⁷⁴, Jean de Durfort-Duras assumed command of Albret's unit. The latter muster shows a complement of only seven to ten names from the lands south of the Garonne, whilst those from Guienne are about nine⁷⁵.

When we come to the Duras company muster of May 1515⁷⁶, the recruitment pattern seems to have moved a little further north again - the identifiable names are split roughly into two groups of equal size by the river Garonne⁷⁷.

73. Heartland Gascons: Albret, Tournemire x 3, Polastron, Millet, Toujouse, Andirans, Mérens, Olivier.

Probable: Roquetaillade.

Guiennois: Duras, Espinas, Foissac, Le Maine.

Probable: Murat.

Other southwesterners: La Faurie, La Mothe, Montclar, La Borde.

74. B.N., Clair. 241, no. 639.

75. Heartland Gascons: Olivier x 2, Tournemire, Polastron, Barbotan, Andirans, Mérens.

Probables: Roquetaillade, Montault, Mauléon.

Béarnese: Campsor.

Guiennois: Duras x 2, Combebonnet, Espinas, Foissac, Esquirol, La Bourlie, Nègrepelisse, Le Maine

Other southwesterners: La Faurie, Salles, Montclar, La Mothe, Laroque.

76. B.N., fr. 25786, no. 5.

77. Heartland Gascons: Olivier x 3, Polastron, Leon, Andirans, Penquet.

Probables: Fargues, Bessac (Berrac?), Arsse (Ausse?), Mauléon.

Guiennois: Duras x 3, Lustrac x 2, Espinas, Espanel, Hautefort, Esquirol, Nègrepelisse.

Probables: Montauban, Le Buisson, Le Maine.

Pyreneans: Campsor, Foix.

Other Southwesterners: Montclar, Beaupuy, La Mothe.

Both the Foix and Albret-Duras companies, therefore, show a marked tendency towards recruitment of compatriots of the captain into the ranks of the gendarmerie. But the most spectacular example of this bias is provided by Gratien d'Aguerre's unit⁷⁸. Gratien was a Basque, but he held property and royal office in Champagne; his company, after its return from Naples at the end of Charles VIII's reign, was stationed almost continuously, it appears, at Mouzon in the Ardennes, where Aguerre was governor. Indeed, Gratien's ties with his homeland would seem non-existent, were it not for the personnel of his compagnie d'ordonnance. Basques and other Gascons abound within its ranks. The April 1493 review⁷⁹ shows that at this stage about one half at least of his gendarmerie were Basques, including men from Spain and Spanish Navarre. A similar proportion of Basques, between 40 and 50% of gendarme strength, is revealed in all the subsequent muster rolls of the company which have survived. Such men must have been conspicuous travellers on the roads linking the Pyrenees to the Ardennes, as they rode to join the company at Mouzon, or headed home on leave.

What are we to make of the results of this geographical study? It is clear that a captain of the

78. Valuable information on this subject is provided by Jaurgain, in "Profils basques", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, iv, pp. 41-8 and 138-9.

79. B.N., fr. 21503, no. 499.

Ordonnance tended to recruit gendarmes who were his compatriots, even though his company might rarely see service in his country. Both the Foix and Albret-Duras companies spent much of our period in Italy, yet both maintained a hard core of Gascons, indeed of Béarnese and Basques in the case of Foix, amongst the gendarmerie throughout the Italian Wars. Gradually a greater number of foreigners enter the ranks, no doubt largely as a result of service in a cosmopolitan war-theatre; yet the change is hardly dramatic. As for Gratien d'Aguerre, his links with the south-west appear to have been negligible, certainly from the time that he assumed command of a company in 1479⁸⁰, but fellow Basques and other Gascons dominate his unit throughout our period. The racial solidarity of the Aguerre company is maintained more surely than in other Gascon companies, owing to the relative stability of its existence, its lack of casualties and its isolation. We can also note how the Albret company, under the command of Jean de Duras for some years by 1515, was by this date more heavily populated by soldiers from the Garonne Basin area, where Duras itself is located, than it had been under Alain d'Albret, when the emphasis had been on the Gascon heartland.

80. Jaurgain, op.cit., p. 31.

Enlistment appears to have been a matter of personal rather than physical contact. A recruit did not so much enter his local company as the one in which a relative, friend or acquaintance already served, be he the captain, an under-officer or simple man-at-arms. In this way, for instance, Monluc became an archer in the Lescun company in Italy - a maternal uncle served in the unit already and procured a place for his nephew⁸¹. Regional solidarity was not based upon service location but upon the geographical origin of the personnel. Consequently, racial uniformity was not much impaired by constant travel, service abroad, or even necessarily by change of captain.

Apart from the Fontrailles company, for which no muster rolls survive, and the Orval company, which saw no Italian service, the Foix-Béarn, Albret-Duras, and Aguerre companies were the only Gascon-led units which existed in the Grande Ordonnance for any length of time between 1494 and 1515. Within this context, the preponderance of men from Béarn and the Basque country within the ranks of these 'Gascon' companies is striking. Did this small area produce an inordinate number of soldiers? It is true that both Jean de Foix-Narbonne and Gratien d'Aguerre were natives of the area, and we would thus expect a fair

81. Monluc, Commentaires, p. 30.

representation of compatriots. Roger de Béarn also was obviously Béarnese, and after he assumed command of the Foix company it continued to include a nucleus of men from the western Pyrenees, as one would expect.⁸² Furthermore, Alain d'Albret, who was the father of the King of Navarre, sovereign of Béarn, did not attract many recruits from the Pyrénées-Atlantiques area. After such considerations are recalled, however, the domination of Gascon-led companies by Béarnese and Basques is still remarkable. When the King of Navarre was granted a company of 100 lances in 1512, he recruited a good number of these types, without apparently attracting men from existing units.⁸³ The other Gascon-led company formed at the end of Louis XII's reign, the 50 lances of Odet de Foix-Lautrec, was not particularly Gascon in flavour according to Jaurgain,⁸⁴ even though Lautrec was Navarrese by upbringing. Many Gascons served in the ranks of other French companies, but many of these who are brought to our attention in

82. Muster of 4th September, 1515 (100 lances complete), B.N., n.a. fr. 8616, fol. 6. The following Béarnese and Basques can be identified amongst the gendarmerie: Béarn x 3, Crouseilles, Anescat, Doumy, Méritein, Maubec, Navailles, Perroix, Gramont x 2, Troisvilles, Beaumont, Laxague x 2, Urtebie, Périz de Garro, Negonavarre, Lobieng, St. Abit.

83. Muster of December 1512, of 70 lances of the Navarre company, B.N., fr. 21508, no. 856. The following Béarnese and Basque men-at-arms are identifiable: Angos, Agnoas, Doumy, Auga, Angous, Laas, Castella, Estibaire, Dous, Béarn, Sadirac, Labatut, Arricau, Lascar, Baudreix, Viellepinte, Castetpugon, Armendaritz x 2, Belsunce, Echaux, Aguerre, Le Basque x 2.

84. Jaurgain, op.cit., p. 158, n.1.

literary sources, for example, are from the Western Pyrenees too. Although Béarn and basse-Navarre must only have accommodated something between 17 and 20% of the population of Gascony,⁸⁵ the area was well known for its large number of noble families - over eight hundred in Béarn according to a German traveller⁸⁶, seven hundred according to a contemporary history of the counts of Foix⁸⁷.

Within this broad geographical context, more definite relationships between captain and man-at-arms can be identified. The captaincy of a body of gendarmes provided an important opportunity to advance the careers of members of one's own family. Gratien d'Aguerre made use of the chance. Although his son and heir, Jean, only entered his father's company, as lieutenant, in 1511, having already served in the unit of the Marshal de Gié and later the hundred gentlemen of the household, Gratien's bastard son, Menaud, served in the company from 1507 at

85. This estimate is based on the figures for parishes and households in 1328, F. Lot, "L'état des paroisses et des feux de 1328", in B.E.C., vol. xc (1929), pp. 51-107 and 236-315. However, we are told that Béarn was largely untouched by the devastation of war in the fifteenth century, compared with, say, the Agenais, or, to a lesser degree, the Bordelais, Boutruche, "The devastation of rural areas", in The recovery of France, ed. Lewis, p. 29. Perhaps, therefore, the proportion of Gascony's population housed by Béarn was somewhat greater in 1500 than it had been in 1328.

86. E. Déprez, "Jérôme Münzer et son voyage dans le midi de la France en 1494-5", in Annales du Midi, vol. xlviii (1936), pp. 53-79; p. 73.

87. B.N., p.o. 1177, fol. 686.

least⁸⁸. Amongst Gratien's nephews, four were members of his company at various times,⁸⁹ whilst four others served in other units⁹⁰. A great-nephew also served in Gratien's troop from 1510, and a first cousin, Pierre de la Carre, until 1507⁹¹. To a considerable extent, therefore, the military careers of members of this family revolved around the company of its most illustrious representative. Indeed, so close were the ties between the Aguerre that, when Gratien died, all but one of his relatives in the company, son Jean, nephew Jehannot, and a certain Francisque, whose identity is unclear, left as well, as the unit was taken over by Louis de Hangest⁹².

At any time between 1501 and 1514, the muster rolls of the Aguerre company show us that about 10% of his gendarme strength was made up of close relatives, including himself, with sometimes one other kinsman serving as an archer, awaiting promotion after his apprenticeship. This calculation even excludes other soldiers called Aguerre, who are always present but whose family ties with Gratien are uncertain. If such a con-

88. Jaurgain, *op.cit.*, pp. 334, 331-2, and 148, respectively. The post of lieutenant had been held by Gratien's brother-in-law, Jehannot d'Athac, some thirty years before Jean's arrival, *ibid.*, p.5.

89. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-3, 155 and n.1. The Bâtard de Luxe, gendarme of the Aguerre company until 1510 at least, is called a 'nephew' of Gratien's in a letter of 1498, L-G. Pélissier, "Note e documenti su Luigi XII e Ludovico Sforza", in *A.S.I.*, ser. 5, vol. xxiii (1899), pp. 145-54, p. 153. Jaurgain does not seem to have known of this particular connection, so that Luxe has been added to the three nephews cited by him.

90. Jaurgain, *op.cit.*, pp. 35, 153-4 and 157-8.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 164 and 44, respectively.

92. B.N., fr. 21510, no. 946. Great-nephew Guilhemto stayed with Hangest.

centration of relatives is less evident in the other companies under scrutiny, it is no doubt as a result of the higher social status of men like Alain d'Albret, Jean de Foix and his son Gaston, and Louis d'Armagnac, whose family members were destined for loftier posts than plain man-at-arms. Besides, both Gaston and Louis, for a number of reasons, suffered from a distinct shortage of serviceable, close kinsmen. Jean de Foix's lieutenant from at least 1497, and later Gaston de Foix's as well, was Roger, baron de Béarn, whom Jean called his 'nephew' in his will⁹³, although he was in fact his second cousin. After Béarn himself had inherited the Foix company, it included three of his relatives, as lieutenant and prominent gendarmes, Bertrand and François de Béarn, and François de Gramont⁹⁴. This pattern is mirrored in the Albret-Duras company: on the assumption of command by Jean de Durfort-Duras, a man of inferior pedigree to Alain d'Albret, a greater admission of relatives into the company is apparent. By 1515, two other Duras have entered the ranks, including a son, François; also a certain Jean de Foix, who is possibly a kinsman through Durfort's second wife, Catherine de Foix. Finally, the lieutenant is now

93. Boucher de Molandon, "Le testament de Jean de Foix," in Bulletin historique et philologique (1885), p.35.

94. Muster of 4th September, 1515, B.N., n.a. fr. 8616, fol. 6; see Anselme, vol. iii, pp. 392-3.

Bertrand de Lustrac, who married Durfort's daughter, Marguerite, in 1511; and one Anthoine de Lustrac, doubtlessly a relative of Bertrand, has also become a gendarme⁹⁵. The short-lived company of Odet d'Aydie was headed by two other Aydies, apart from Odet himself, in 1495⁹⁶. Jayme de St. Colombe, lieutenant of the company of Odet de Foix-Lautrec, was his captain's second cousin⁹⁷.

Gendarmes were sometimes personal servants of their captain. Lieutenants in particular were their captain's men, throughout our period. A Venetian ambassador in Milan made this clear in 1520 when he observed that company lieutenants received pensions from their captain, as well as from the King⁹⁸. To Jean de Foix, his lieutenant Roger de Béarn was his "... very dear nephew and servant...", to whom Foix bequeathed a lordship in his will⁹⁹. Roger was also bailli and

95. Muster of 31st May, 1515, B.N., fr. 25786, no. 5; Anselme, v, pp. 733-5; Lauzun, "Le château de Duras", in Revue de l'Agenais, vol. xlviii, p.171. François de Duras served in the St. André company during 1512-14, despite his father captaining a unit during these years, B.N. fr. 21508, nos. 857 and 874.

96. B.N., n.a. fr. 8612, fol.I.

97. Jaurgain, Deux comtes de Comminges, pp. 76-81; Anselme, iii, pp. 373-5.

98. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. Segarizzi, vol. ii, p.20.

99. Boucher de Molandon, loc.cit..

captain of Etampes from 1491 to 1517, offices at the disposal of the Foix till 1512¹⁰⁰. Although the ties between Foix and Béarn were obviously close, their strength was never tested, as were those between Alain d'Albret and his one-time lieutenant, Raymond de Cardailhac. We have already seen how Cardailhac led perhaps the bulk of the Albret company to Alain's aid in Brittany in 1487; subsequently, unlike most of the deserters, he stood by his captain and was rewarded for his loyalty by inclusion in the terms of the Treaty of Nantes in 1491 - he was to receive a royal pension of 1200 livres and a company of 50 lances of his own¹⁰¹.

100. G.R., no. 12364. Roger did not rely only upon the Foix for advancement. In March, 1511, the seigneur de Boissy wrote to Louis XII, asking that Béarn be promoted to the seneschalship of Valentinois, in Dauphiné, B.N., fr. 2928, fol. 17. Soon after Béarn got this post, Boissy became governor of Dauphiné, G.R., no. 7856. The link between the two men lasted until Roger's death, with Boissy as count of Etampes and Béarn as bailli of the same, *ibid.*, nos. 12364-5.

101. Luchaire, *Alain le grand*, pp. 70 and 75. Pélicier notes that Cardaillac was one of three men who negotiated the surrender of Nantes with Charles VIII, on Albret's behalf (for which the three were paid 18,000 livres by the King), *Lettres de Charles VIII*, vol. i., p. 192, n.1. Another of the three was Arnaut de St. Chamant, seigneur de Lissac, who had replaced Roger de Gramont as seneschal of Lannes by 1492, G.R., no. 13874 - further remuneration, perhaps, for his services at Nantes. As part of the surrender terms, Albret's son, Gabriel, also replaced the count of Candale as seneschal of Guienne, *ibid.*, nos. 13470 and 20138-9; ironically enough, Candale was the very man who had defeated Alain at Nontron in 1487, *Lettres*, i, p. 189, n.1. Evidently, those who stood by Alain d'Albret were not let down. However, by the time of the wars in Italy, Lissac appears as a loyal servant of the Crown, commanding the artillery in Naples in 1502, for example, Auton, vol. ii, p. 278 and n.3 - another reformed rebel.

Cardailhac was an inveterate companion of Albret: near Orléans in 1483, for instance, he had signed as a witness an engagement of his master's¹⁰². Although he was soon to lose his new company, he did become seneschal of Quercy in 1493¹⁰³. The relationship between Albret and Jean de Durfort-Duras is less clear. Jean's younger brother, Georges, was lieutenant of the Albret company in 1492-3,¹⁰⁴ during an interlude in Cardailhac's tenancy of the post. Certainly a plaintiff against Duras, Jean Aubin, seigneur de Surgières, did not underestimate the strength of the ties which bound the defendant to Alain d'Albret - Surgières wanted his case to be transferred from the Parlement of Bordeaux to the Great Council of the King, because his opponent, Duras, was the "lieutenant-general of Monsieur d'Albret, governor of Guienne, who had influence and favour" in the Parlement¹⁰⁵. Lieutenants continued to be personal appointees of captains throughout our period. The Crown accepted this: in 1515, Francis

102. C. Samaran, La maison d'Armagnac au XVe siècle et les dernières luttes de la féodalité dans le Midi de la France (Paris, 1907), pièces justificatives, p.441. In 1487, both he and Lissac were to be handed into royal custody as hostages, amongst others, for Albret's good behaviour, Lettres, i, p. 192.

103. G.R., no. 18654. Cardailhac is another who, after a rebellious past, settles into a career of service to the Crown, in Quercy and in Italy.

104. B.N., fr. 21503, no. 501.

105. Viala, Le Parlement de Toulouse, vol. ii, p. 451.

I simply insisted that lieutenants be experienced warriors¹⁰⁶ - it was not the client status of these men that interested the King, but their military quality, in this most important of posts in the standing army.

The ties of clientage reached down into the lower ranks as well. Every captain had always maintained a number of gendarmes and archers in his retinue, and even Louis XI had been unable to abolish the practice. Since these soldiers would accompany the captain in his movements (and many captains spent much time away from their companies) the tendency obviously weakened company strength¹⁰⁷. The maintenance of retinues continued throughout our period, however, and was even sanctioned in law: the 1515 ordinance authorised a detachment of six gendarmes and ten archers for a captain of 100 lances, when he was in attendance upon the King; four and eight respectively when the captain was absent from his company for any other reason. In the captain's absence, his lieutenant must remain with the company, but he too, and more junior officers, were entitled to a small archer guard¹⁰⁸. As Lieutenant-General in Milan, Odet de Lautrec kept a court of twenty-five gentlemen from his company who received pensions from him, apart from their wages as royal soldiers¹⁰⁹. Jean de Foix left 400 gold écus

106. Ordonnances de Francois 1er, i, no. 17, clause 19.

107. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société, pp. 484-5.

108. Ordonnances, i, no. 17, clauses 12 and 14.

109. Caroldo's relation, p.13.

to one of his gendarmes, Jehannot de la Plume, in his will, whilst the document itself, drawn up at Orléans when the Foix company was almost certainly elsewhere, was witnessed by Jehannot de Gan, one of Foix's maîtres d'hôtel and a gendarme of his company, a certain Raoulin le Natier, an archer of the company, and one Jean Horin, valet de chambre and also an archer of the Foix company, amongst others.¹¹⁰ Another of Jean de Foix's gendarmes, Gaston de St. Laurens, was a long-standing servant: he was granted revenues "... in consideration of the good and agreeable services which... he had performed since the time of his youth, as valet de chambre ordinaire, as well as in other ways...¹¹¹". One of Alain d'Albret's henchmen, Helyot de Rouffiac, served in the Albret company until June 1503¹¹²; he was one of those who had guarded Charles d'Armagnac when he was imprisoned at Casteljaloux castle by Alain¹¹³.

110. Boucher de Molandon, op.cit., pp. 35-6.

111. B.N., p.o. 1174, no. 226. All these servants of Jean de Foix-Narbonne can be found in the review of his company on 27th October, 1499, B.N., n.a. fr. 8612, fol. 33.

112. B.N., fr. 21503, no. 501; B.N., Clair. 239, no 451. Despite his noble status, Rouffiac had been demoted from gendarme to archer by 1498, after the Albret company had been halved in size, B.N., fr. 21504, no. 607.

113. Samaran, op.cit., pp. 275 and 465.

Other, less formal connections between captain and gendarme can be established. Gaspard de Villemur, who served in the Foix company in 1492-3, was made governor of the county of Comminges in January 1496, to see particularly to its defence¹¹⁴. It was at this time that Charles VIII was attempting to install Jean de Foix-Narbonne in the county. Pierre de Tardes, a man-at-arms in the company at the same time as Villemur, is later found as castellan of three places in Dauphiné, at the time when Gaston de Foix was governor of this province.¹¹⁵ Jean Segnier, who may well have been the same man as he of that name who served in the Foix company between 1497 and 1504, was viguier of Narbonne between 1509 and 1513¹¹⁶; the viscounty of Narbonne was held by the Foix until 1507, so perhaps Segnier was simply continuing in the post he had held under his former company captain. Finally, it seems probable that Roger de Béarn's lieutenant as captain-castellan of Mauléon, governor of Soule, 'noble Jehannot, seigneur de Faget', was the same man as Jehannot de Fanget, who served as man-at-arms in the Foix company (under the effective command of Béarn) between 1498 and 1510¹¹⁷. No doubt examples of this sort could be multiplied, but it would be a mistake to think of such relationships being necessarily detrimental to the interests of

114. B.N., Clair. 238, no. 361; B.N., fr. 21503, no. 495; G.R., no. 21901.

115. Ibid., nos. 9198, 9927, 12052 and 12054.

116. B.N., fr. 21505, no. 627 and fr. 25783, no. 51; G.R., no. 5303 bis.

117. Jaurgain, "Les capitaines de Mauléon," in Revue de Béarn, vol. 11, p. 253; B.N., fr. 21505, no. 627 and fr. 21507, no. 814.

the Crown. For once powerful nobles had become tied to the Monarchy by means of pensions and offices, their clients, who became indirect recipients of royal bounty, came to have a vested interest in the maintenance of the tie. Company solidarity was, as we have seen, actively encouraged by the Crown. Besides, only a minority of gendarmes and archers were ever involved in the personal service of their captain. A Venetian envoy to France, reporting in 1492, even implied that the positions of gendarme and servant were mutually exclusive: "... apart from their companies, they maintained their familiars, more or less of them, according to their pensions¹¹⁸," he claimed, when discussing the French nobility.

* * *

The gendarmerie of the king of France was the heavy weapon of his army, and its ideal role in combat was akin to that of the battlefleet in the heyday of the Dreadnought battleship. It was to smash into, and reduce to disarray, the enemy line, by sheer weight, velocity and fury. Given the battle-role, the equipment of a gendarme appears logical enough. The man-at-arms wore full armour, from head to toe, and carried a wooden lance

118. Contarini's relation, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. Alberi, vol. iv, p. 21.

as his basic offensive weapon. Equally important and more expensive than this equipment was the gendarme's horse. The number of horses per lance has been the subject of differing opinions. All that need be said is that the man-at-arms would have had more than one mount, including one big horse for use in combat¹¹⁹. The returning Venetian ambassador's report of 1492 noted that the heavy horse of the gendarme was armoured with bards¹²⁰, although a modern authority cites an Italian eyewitness, who saw 300 lances at Reggio-Emilia in 1494 and counted only four pairs of bards amongst them¹²¹. Bards or no, this heavy cavalry, supported by a larger body of light horse, called 'archers' by the French, was a formidable, if rather inflexible tool. This quality depended to a large degree upon the quality of the horses. They certainly impressed the Italians: for example, the men of the Fontrailles company at Treviglio in 1509 were described as "... in excellent condition, in regard to both weapons and mounts", whilst the company of Jean de

119. Caroldo, op.cit., p. 20.

120. Contarini, op.cit., p. 20.

121. Y. Labande-Mailfert, Charles VIII et son milieu, 1470-98 (Paris, 1975), p. 247. Part of this force consisted of the company of Louis d'Armaganac. It seems probable that bards were not being worn on this occasion simply because the troops in question were not in readiness for battle.

Durfort-Duras, stationed at Crema in 1512, also excited the admiration of the Venetians, for it was composed of "... very good men, fine-looking," and with "... beautiful horses..."¹²². After the surrender of Crema by Duras to the Venetians, he and his men were afraid lest the Swiss forces nearby should carry out their threat to hack the French to pieces; Duras wanted protection from Venice. Her representatives suggested a retreat eastwards as far as Venice itself, or some other secure location. This plan would have entailed the French abandoning their horses (presumably because the intention was to embark the company for a sea voyage back to France), so that Duras declined the offer: "The French love their horses very much and want to take them back to France", concluded the spokesman of the Republic¹²³. The fine quality of French horses in the archers' ranks also impressed the Venetians¹²⁴.

122. Diarii, vol. viii, col. 215 and vol. xv, cols. 82-3. The French garrison which surrendered at Treviglio in 1509 possessed one hundred and fifty "... perfect chargers" and two hundred other horses, even though it numbered only 50 or so men-at-arms, some light horse and 1500 foot, ibid., viii, cols 205, 210 and 215. The Fontrailles company of 30 lances - soon to be increased to 40 - formed the bulk of the cavalry, therefore. As a cavalryman, the gendarme had to act as blacksmith as well as soldier: the Bâtard de Luxe, of the Aguerre company, carried a maintenance kit for his horse, with hammer, pliers, shoes and nails, Pélissier, op.cit., in A.S.I., ser. 5, xxiii, p. 154.

123. Diarii, xv, col. 99.

124. Caroldo, op.cit., p.17.

Perhaps the combat role of the gendarmerie also partially helped to determine its moral characteristics. Essentially an offensive weapon, furious in the charge but vulnerable in the face of well-defended fieldworks, the Ordonnances were often intolerant of lengthy operations requiring the qualities of patience and doggedness. Machiavelli thought the French gendarmerie impetuous rather than courageous, for it was impatient of hardship: the gendarmes "... were more than men at first, but afterwards less than women", he concluded, in reference to the Ravenna campaign of 1512¹²⁵. He was simply echoing a cliché of the times, for Commynes had mentioned the inveterate dictum: "... on their arrival the French are more than men, but in retreat they are less than women." Commynes, however, was more willing to accept the first part of the aphorism than the last - the cavalry were "... truly the fiercest men that could be encountered in the whole world¹²⁶." The contemporary image of the gendarme as a lusty rogue of extravagant tastes and dubious morals complements this wartime personality. He is a man full of show and bravado, but basically a shirker, even a coward. This is a picture we can accept more readily when we remember

125. Machiavelli, "Sketch of France", in Works, tr. Farneworth, ii, pp. 496-7.

126. P. de Commynes, Memoirs, tr. I. Cazeaux, ed. S. Kinser, vol. ii, (Columbia, 1973), p. 541.

that the average age of both gendarmes and archers was only about 28 years, (although that of captains was perhaps 40 to 50)¹²⁷.

Gaguin's gendarme is a rough type, much given to swearing, who despises both the priest and the labourer with whom he argues - the former is not only a "weakling" but a miser, whilst the latter is chastised as a coward and drunken imbecile¹²⁸. The gendarme rounds off his discourse by concluding that "... if St. Peter himself had lived amongst gendarmes he would have become coarse... for such was the nature of war and arms."¹²⁹ The Estates-General of 1484 were treated to complaints about soldiers' bad language: "... without fear or respect they swear, lie and blaspheme the name of God, the Virgin, and the blessed Saints."¹³⁰ And as well as a blasphemer, the gendarme was a notorious womaniser. Compagnies d'ordonnance were normally attended by a band of hangers-on, including prostitutes; this was condoned by the authorities, although subject to occasional regulation¹³¹. One article of the 1515 army act simply proscribes the use of horses

127. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 456 and 416.

128. Gaguin, Epistole et Orationes, ii, pp. 360-5.

129. Ibid., p. 365.

130. Masselin, Journal, p. 207.

131. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 451-2.

by women camp-followers - their presence as such was not apparently questioned¹³². Gaguin's labourer complained that he had to provide "... white bedsheets for (the gendarme's) whore¹³³, " whilst a contemporary song celebrates the abduction of a girl by gendarmes on their way to Italy:

"Have you seen the lass
The gendarmes took away?
They dressed her like a page,
To pass through Dauphiné..."¹³⁴

Proverbially, the gendarme also spent money immoderately. It appears that he was addicted to many aspects of the noble life - hunting, gaming, sports - without necessarily being of noble birth by any means. Contamine suggests that perhaps only between a half and three-quarters of gendarmes were noblemen, although a career in the Ordonnances might be regarded as proof of gentility, or at least act in support of a claim to such status¹³⁵. At all events, the ranks of the gendarmerie included a whole range of men of varying fortunes, and it can well be imagined how the humbler type of recruit ran

132. Ordonnances de François Ier, i, no. 17, clause 35.

133. Gaguin, op.cit., p. 352.

134. Chansons du XVe siècle, publ. by G. Paris (Société des Anciens Textes Français) (Paris, 1875), p. 41.

135. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 472-6 and 498. Archers were not usually noblemen, ibid., p. 465.

into financial difficulties in his attempts to ape the life-style of his richer colleagues - a tendency common enough, for example, in British cavalry regiments in the late Victorian army. Apart from the expense of equipment and horses¹³⁶, luxury items emptied the purse. The 1515 ordinance complained that troops had been transporting baggage with them on campaign, and granted this privilege only to officers¹³⁷. More scathing criticism of the love of finery is available in literary sources. Gaguin's priest accuses his victim of excessive devotion to fashionable clothes, leaving the gendarme with no option but to live off the populace, once he had spent all his money. The priest goes on to chide the soldier with softness - instead of enjoying his "... coffers, dogs and birds", he should go and do some fighting¹³⁸. At the Tours Estates, many gendarmes were accused of presumptuous extravagance: "... everyone is now dressed in velvets and silks, which is a most harmful situation, both for the prosperity of the realm and for its morals; for there is not a musician, valet, barber, or a man-at-arms - (I am not speaking of the nobles amongst them) - who is not clothed in velvet, with a collar and gold ring, like the princes... I do not see the point of silk and velvets in

136. Contamine calculates that during the period 1440-60, full equipment would have cost at least 220 livres tournois, the equivalent of the revenue of a fine fief, or nearly fifteen months' pay, *ibid.*, p. 510. See also annexe XII, section D.

137. *Ordonnances*, no. 17, clause 4.

138. Gaguin, *op.cit.*, p. 358.

war...¹³⁹." The image of the sumptuously dressed but penniless gendarme is a recurring theme in contemporary literature. The poet Henri Baude sets up this stock character as a figure of fun, "puffed-up like a toad," in his "Ballad of an elegant dandy"¹⁴⁰. Another song tells of "dainty dandies" dressed in their fashionably-cut doublets, with their extravagant headgear and fancy shoes, who are finally unable to pay for their modest lodgings¹⁴¹. In both poems, the gendarme is not only over-dressed but a shirker too; Baude's soldier wears a torn coat so as to give the impression of having just returned from action¹⁴². As for the "dainty dandies", they require two pails of water for washing each morning¹⁴³.

Naturally, these images are caricatures. Yet there is no doubt that gendarmes valued appearances highly. Brantôme, who does not write ironically, tells us that Lautrec always bore scars on his face, from wounds sustained at the battle of Ravenna - they were "... marks of honour worthy of esteem"¹⁴⁴. "Gentlemen of the time, Brantôme assures us, despised the study of letters as

139. Masselin, op.cit., p. 209.

140. Quicherat, "Henri Baude", in B.E.C., vol. x, p.121.

141. Chansons, pp. 130-1.

142. Quicherat, loc.cit..

143. Chansons, p. 131.

144. Brantôme, Oeuvres, iii, pp. 188-9.

effeminate, although the author thinks this attitude foolish; Lautrec's brother, Lescun, whose company Monluc joined, was no exception, so he quit the law for the army¹⁴⁵.

The role of Gascony in providing the bulk of France's native infantrymen during our period is well-known. Machiavelli excluded from his general deprecation of French foot "... some regiments of Gascon infantry... who were somewhat better than the rest; for, as they lived near the confines of Spain, they seemed to have caught a little of the Spanish discipline and spirit."¹⁴⁶ Other commentators identified the south-west of France as the source of her best troops, whether of foot or horse. In 1520, the former Venetian envoy to Milan wrote that Aquitaine "... was full of courageous infantry and cavalry"¹⁴⁷, and another representative of the Republic agreed, some eight years later, that Gascony "... provided the best soldiers in France"¹⁴⁸.

145. Ibid., pp. 196-8.

146. Machiavelli, op.cit., p. 495.

147. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni, ed. Segarizzi, ii, p. 13.

148. A. Navagero's voyage, in Relations des ambassadeurs vénétiens, tr. and ed. Tormaseo, vol. i, pp. 1-39, p. 19. As late as 1561, a Venetian envoy was saying the same - the Gascon footsoldier was the nearest thing France had to a Spaniard, M. Suriano's commentaries, ibid., pp. 465-563; p. 495.

The Gascon proportion of the compagnies d'ordonnance is, of course, impossible to establish without thorough investigation of all surviving muster lists. But some idea of the importance of Gascons in the regular army can be gained by other means. Firstly, although the majority of budget rolls of the Ordinaire des Guerres - in other words, the lists of companies which a given war treasurer was responsible for paying in a given year - have disappeared, a few remain: in 1501, for instance, the French finances had charge of 2170 lances, of which 180 were led by Gascon captains¹⁴⁹. Other troops were probably already supported by Milan at this date, but it is not until 1505 that we know the composition of this force: of 655 lances paid by the Milanese war treasurer, only 30, the Fontrailles company, were

149. B.N., fr. 2960, fol. 14 and fr. 2927, fol. 34. The following Gascon-led units were paid by the two French treasurers of war: Foix company (50 lances), Albret (50), Orval (30), Aguerre (50). We know that the company of Louis d'Armagnac was also in existence at this time, so it must have been supported by Milan. Ferdinand Lot has presented a list of the strength of the Ordonnances for each year throughout, and beyond our period, in his Recherches sur les effectifs des armées françaises, des guerres d'Italie aux guerres de religion (1494-1562) (Paris, 1962), pp. 241-7. However, those troops paid by Italian treasurers are not included in the list, and hence the full complement of the French army is frequently understated.

Gascon-led¹⁵⁰. The only complete list of the whole army during our period, which is known to the author, details Louis XII's forces, following the big expansion in strength in 1512; 3590 lances are listed, of which 575 are led by Gascon captains¹⁵¹. The proportion for the year 1513, therefore, was about one-sixth, but it was above average for our period as a whole, even though the Gascon proportion remained high during the next few years¹⁵². We must imagine about 10% of all lances being under Gascon captains normally. If Gascony contained about 12% of the population of the realm at this time¹⁵³, this figure is roughly commensurate with that; however, some companies

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150. B.N., fr. 7882, fol. 2. This document, together with the first account of 1501 cited above (B.N. fr. 2960, fol. 14), have both been partially reproduced by Pélissier in "Note italienne sulla storia di Francia," in A.S.I., ser. 5, vol. xx (1897), pp. 108-17.
151. B.N., fr. 2928, fol. 10. The following Gascon-led units are entered: Béarn company (100 lances), Lautrec (100), King of Navarre (100), Orval (100) Duras (50), Aguerre (50), Fontrailles (50), Baron de Caussade (25).
152. For instance, one of the French war-treasurers paid 1480 lances in the second half of 1514, of whom 250 were Gascon-led, B.N., Clair. 132, fol. 66.
153. 'Gascony' is defined here as the region now incorporated by the départements of Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Hautes-Pyrénées, Landes, Gers, Gironde, Haute-Garonne, Lot-et-Garonne and Ariège. See Lot, "L'état des paroisses et des feux de 1328," in B.E.C., xc, pp. 51-107 and 236-315.

were not led by French subjects at all - in 1513, for instance, some 325 lances were led by Italians alone. We have already seen that most of the Gascon-led units were heavily populated by men from the south-west. At the same time, there is evidence that Gascons were common in many other companies as well. Jaurgain, for instance, studied a selection of them from the beginning of our period and identified a fair proportion of Gascons, Béarnese and Basques within them: the gendarmerie of the Orléans company in 1495 was 8% Gascon, of the Ligny company in 1494, 9%, including the lieutenant, of the Montfaucon company in 1495, 8%¹⁵⁴. In 1501, the company of 30 lances of Robert de la Marck contained at least seven Gascon gendarmes, including the lieutenant, and at least six Gascon archers¹⁵⁵. The patronage of Gascons by La Marck seems to have been a tradition, for Fleuranges tells us that in 1512 the guidon of the company was one

154. Jaurgain, "Profils basques", pp. 49, n.1, 50, n.1 and 51, n.6. Other smaller companies noted by the author reach even higher proportions of Gascon strength, up to 20%, *ibid.*, pp. 49, n.1, 52, n.3, 53, n.1 and 58, n.4. Compare the muster-lists of the unit of Louis Malet de Graville, published by G. Beaurain, in his article, "Lettre de commission du roi Charles VIII relative à un déplacement de troupe, 1496, 15 juin," in Le Moyen Age, vol. xlii (1932), pp. 252-60.

155. Jaurgain, op.cit., p. 137, n.3.

Gratien d'Armendaritz, "... from the frontiers of Navarre," who died at the assault on Ravenna that year, whilst in 1513 half of the now enlarged company was led by the Gascon, Bastard Jeannot, who had been lieutenant of the unit since 1500 or so¹⁵⁶. Here are shades of Aguerre's company, with Pyrenean soldiers crossing the length of France to serve in a company stationed on the northern fringes of the kingdom.

* * *

How large a part did Italian service play in the careers of Gascon companies between 1494 and 1515? Two units can be set aside fairly promptly: the company of Jean d'Albret, seigneur d'Orval, seems never to have crossed the Alps, whilst that of Gratien d'Aguerre, after its return from Naples in 1497 or 1498, never again went to Italy - every known review of Aguerre's company after this time took place in northern France, and there is no mention of its service in the peninsula in any other

156. Robert de la Mark, seigneur de Fleurange, Histoire des choses memorables advenues du reigne de Louis XII et François Ier, in Collection des Mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol xvi, pp. 213, 252 and 148.

source¹⁵⁷. Two more units, those of Louis d'Armagnac, duc de Nemours, and Jean d'Astarac, seigneur de Fontrailles, are known to have been closely involved with Italy, but documentary evidence of their movements over a number of years is lacking, especially in the form of muster lists, so that their members are largely unknown to us as well¹⁵⁸. The only long-service Gascon

157. Twelve muster-rolls survive for the span 1493 to 1518; the first and last locate the Aguerre company at Vitry-en-Partois and Rheims, respectively - all the rest were drawn up at Mouzon: 3:4:1493 (B.N., fr. 21503, no. 499); 10:4:1499 (fr. 21505, no. 632); 22:7:1499 (*ibid.*, no. 638); 28:5:1501 (fr. 21509, no. 881 - this roll has been inserted under the year 1515); 11:3:1504 (B.N., fr. 25783, no. 56); 18:7:1506 (B.N., Duchesne 7, fol. 269 - copy); 31:5:1507 (B.N., fr. 21507, no. 779); 12:6:1510 (fr. 21508, no. 822); 16:9:1510 (*ibid.*, no. 828); 17:12:1510 (B.N., Clair. 241, no. 657); 9:12:1514 (B.N., fr. 25785, no. 220); 17:2:1518 (B.N., fr. 21510, no. 946).

158. We have three muster-lists of Armagnac's company: it was reviewed on 25th November, 1492, at Guise (B.N., fr. 25782, no. 114), on 9th August, 1495, at Vercelli, in Piedmont (B.N., Clair. 239, no. 433) and again at Vercelli in the same year (part of the date being obliterated) (B.N., fr. 21503, no. 538). Comparatively few Gascons appear in these surviving lists. No muster-rolls can be found of the Armagnac company which took part in the second Neapolitan campaign and had as its lieutenant Gaspard de Coligny, seigneur de Fromontes, Auton, i, p. 61, n.2 and ii, p. 280. The unit appears to have included a fair number of Gascons by 1502, however, *ibid.*, ii, p. 280. There are no extant review-lists of the Fontrailles company. It is the only Gascon-led unit of which we have documentary proof of payment by Italian funds, during our period. The Milanese war-treasurer's accounts for 1505 and 1506 show that the Fontrailles company was mustered in five different locations between October 1505 and June 1507, usually in south Piedmont: La Morra, Montault (unidentified location), Bra, Pinerolo and Cherasco,

Cont/...

companies, with important/careers, whose movements and, more especially, whose personnel can be studied over an extended period are the Foix and Albret-Duras companies¹⁵⁹.

158. B.N., fr. 7882, fols. 83 vo. and 238. Jean d'Auton tells us that this unit's customary base was in the Astisan, which accords well with the treasurer's evidence, Auton, iv, p. 162. At this stage the Fontrailles company numbered 30 lances, but in 1509 it acquired 10 more, from the Châtellart company, B.N., fr. 21507, no. 799. It seems highly probable that the Fontrailles company remained in Italy continuously, until 1512 or possibly until 1513 (since we have a reference to its station at Milan castle, which held out till that year, in July 1512, Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, vol. i, pt. I, ed. J. Brewer and R.H. Brodie (London, 1920), p. 598). The only indication of the personnel of the Fontrailles company is contained in the list of captives taken at Treviglio in 1509, but the names have been italicised beyond certain recognition, Diarii, viii, col. 217.
159. The companies of Aydie, Lautrec, Navarre and Caussade are not included, owing to their short life during our period.

The Foix company was continually involved in campaigns in Italy. It took part in Charles VIII's Neapolitan expedition, returning north with the King in 1495¹⁶⁰, (although no muster rolls survive for this period). Towards the end of Charles' reign, the unit appears to have been stationed at Asti¹⁶¹, and it later participated in the conquest of Lombardy in 1499¹⁶². For the next few years, the Foix company seems to have been garrisoned on either side of the Alps, at different times. It apparently had no role in the reconquest of Lombardy in 1500, nor did it form part of the Lombardy garrison after this success¹⁶³, but it was dispatched to Italy in the winter of 1501-2¹⁶⁴. The first muster we have after 1499 locates the Foix company at Plaisance

160. J. de la Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie (Nantes, 1866), p. 274.

161. Diarii, i, col. 583.

162. Musters at Montregrosa (21:2:1499), B.N., fr. 21505, no. 627; Annona (19:8:1499), B.N., Clair. 240, no. 519; Salles (27:10:1499), B.N., na. fr. 8612, fol. 33. At the siege of Alessandria, towards the end of August, a number of Foix's soldiers distinguished themselves: the Masparrautes fought well (two of whom appear as gendarmes at the Annona review with two more being promoted from archer at the end of August), whilst the archer Bertrand de Bayonne was badly wounded, Auton, i, pp. 42 and 57.

163. ibid., pièces annexes, p. 383.

164. B.N., fr. 25718, no. 57.

in 1503, probably one of the towns of that name in Gascony rather than the Italian city of Piacenza¹⁶⁵. By August that year, the unit was crossing the Alps on its way to join the relief force for Naples¹⁶⁶. After service on the Garigliano during the winter¹⁶⁷, the Foix company returned by sea to Genoa, where it was reviewed in January 1504¹⁶⁸. During the years of relative peace which followed the expulsion from Naples, the Foix company was usually, if not always, to be found in the Milanese¹⁶⁹.

165. 5th June, 1503 (B.N., fr. 21506, no. 720). Two considerations favour Plaisance over Piacenza: firstly, we know that within two months the Foix company was reviewed at Aisone, on the Italian side of the Col de Larche, and that it subsequently moved south to the Garigliano - a muster at Piacenza would have meant that the unit inexplicably marched to the Alps, before doubling back southwards. Secondly, 'Plaisance' is not qualified in the muster roll, and it is usual for Milanese locations to be described as "in the duchy of Milan".
166. Muster at Aisone (4:8:1503), B.N., fr. 21506, no. 726.
167. Auton, iii, p. 262.
168. Muster at Genoa (13:1:1504), B.N., fr. 25783, no. 51.
169. All surviving review-rolls of this period place the company in the duchy: Salles (23:7:1505), B.N., Clair. 241, no. 597; Valenza (3:10:1505), *ibid.*, no. 601; Salles (19:2:1506), B.N., fr. 21507, no. 765, Parma (1:1:1507), *ibid.*, no. 775.

Indeed Jean d'Auton, Louis XII's historiographer, asserts that Salles, near Pavia, was its customary home¹⁷⁰. The company took part in the expedition to Bologna in 1506, and the reduction of Genoa in 1507¹⁷¹, before joining the major offensive against the Venetian territories in 1509. In fact, it seems almost certain that the Foix company remained in Italy from this date through to 1512 without interruption, and it fought at the battle of Ravenna¹⁷². In 1513, the company, now under the captaincy of Roger de Béarn, fought in the Novara and Flemish campaigns¹⁷³,

170. Anton, iv, p. 160. Auton's editor notes that Salles was a fort guarding the Ticino river, ibid., p. 161, n.3.

171. Ibid., pp. 70-1, 160 and 196.

172. Apparently, the unit had left Italy and returned in early 1509, and was then stationed at Trezzo, Diarii, vii, col 766 and viii, cols. 47 and 91-2. We have one muster from the 1509, Venetian campaign, at Peschiera, on 29th August (B.N., fr. 21507, no. 798). There are numerous indications of the Foix company in Italy in subsequent years: muster at Joursenove (location uncertain, but evidently in Italy) on 1st March 1510 (ibid., no. 814); notifications of the unit at Brescia in April 1510, Parma in June 1511 and with the field army under Gaston de Foix in 1512, Diarii, x, col. 282, xii, cols. 268-70 and xiii, cols. 425-7; references to the Foix company at Ravenna can be found in ibid., xiv, cols. 172-4 and in Histoire du gentil seigneur de Bayard par le loyal serviteur, ed.M.H.Roman,S.H.F.(Paris,1877).
 173. Fleurange, Histoire, p. 234; Diarii, xvi, cols. 319- p.432; B.N., fr. 2929, fol. 16.

before finally taking part in the expedition of 1515, culminating in the battle of Marignano¹⁷⁴.

The Albret company also gained wide experience of Italy, although it was late in the field, taking no part in the expeditions of 1494 and 1499¹⁷⁵. At last, however, this unit was ordered to Italy in late 1501¹⁷⁶, and it was reviewed at Asti in February 1502¹⁷⁷. In later 1503, the Albret company moved south to fight on the Garigliano¹⁷⁸. During the years of peace that followed, the company seems to have formed part of the Lombardy garrison and it was involved in the Bolognan and Genoese expeditions of 1506 and 1507, respectively¹⁷⁹. The unit,

174. Muster at Turbie (Turbigo?), on 4th September, 1515 (B.N., n.a.fr. 8616, fol.6).
175. The Albret company spent the early years of our period on frontier duty at home: musters at Dôle (11:4:1493), B.N., fr. 21503, no. 501; Beauvais (1495), L'Epinois, *op.cit.*, in B.E.C., vol. xxv, p.138; Castres (27.6.1498), B.N., fr. 21504, no. 607; move to Champagne, from Languedoc (1498), B.N., fr. 25718, no. 17 and B.N., p.o. 2090 (dossier Narbonne), no. 60, and muster at Neufville (8:11:1498), B.N., Clair. 239, no. 493; muster at Béthune (9:5:1499), B.N., fr. 21505, no. 634; musters at Doullens (13:8:1499), B.N., n.a.fr. 8612, fol. 31, and (10:2:1500), B.N., fr. 21505, no. 662. One more muster-list survives for this period, but both the date and location have been obliterated, B.N., Clair. 239, no. 451.
176. B.N., fr. 25718, no. 57.
177. Muster at Asti (28:2:1502), B.N., fr. 25783, no. 41.
178. Muster at Lugagnano (6:8:1503), B.N., fr. 21506, no. 728, and Auton, iii, p. 262.
179. Musters at Parma (27:7:1505), B.N., fr. 25784, no. 82, and (17:6:1507), B.N., fr. 21507, no. 780; Auton, iv, pp. 70 and 160-1.

now under the captaincy of Jean de Durfort, participated in the war against Venice in 1509, during which the town of Crema was captured, and this place became the unit's base¹⁸⁰. From now on, the Duras company was continuously in Italy, and although it did not fight at Ravenna, it saw action in the Venetian siege of Crema in mid-1512¹⁸¹. Afterwards, the company did service in both the Novara and Marignano campaigns¹⁸².

It is evident that during our period some French companies developed into Italian-based forces, whilst others remained centred upon the frontiers of the homeland. The Foix and Albret companies must be included in the former category, even though they were the responsibility of the French treasurers of war throughout. The Fontrailles

180. Diarii, viii, cols. 91-2, muster at Crema (30:8:1509), B.N., Clair. 241, no. 639.

181. Diarii, x, col. 282 and xii, cols. 268-70; B.N., Dupuy 262, fol 86; Diarii, xiii, cols. 425-7. Favre, in his Précis historique sur la famille de Durfort-Duras, p. 52, maintains that the Duras company fought at Ravenna, basing his claim on a list of troops engaged in the battle, from the Chambre des Comptes of Grenoble. Favre's claim is unconfirmed in any other source known to me, but seems to stem from a misreading of the Grenoble document, or a fault in the latter itself - Venetian information records the same French line-up for the battle as Favre, except that the 50 lances of 'Duras' have become 50 lances of 'Dars', in other words the well-known captain, Louis d'Ars, Diarii, xiv, cols. 172-4. Louis d'Ars was captain of 50 lances at the time and they were indeed engaged at the battle of Ravenna, Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 433.

182. Diarii, xvi, cols. 319-20; muster at Alessandria (8:9:1515), B.N., Clair. 243, no. 729, and Diarii, xxi, cols. 329-30.

company, paid by the Milanese war treasury, probably as long as this office remained in French control, was another Italian-based unit. We may term the Orval and Aguerre companies French-based. It is perhaps safest not to categorise Armagnac's company in one or other group, for it did not survive long enough to establish any definite pattern of service. No doubt such a pattern depended largely upon the company captain, the nature of his duties in France, his status as a soldier, his appetite for involvement in Italy, or upon his lieutenant, if the captain himself took little part in the running of his *compagnie d'ordonnance*. Although captains did serve in Italy at times when their units stayed at home, and conversely, companies went into the peninsula without their captains, and remained in garrison there sometimes even without their lieutenants, it seems to be a general rule, nonetheless, that the service record of companies largely follows that of their commanders. The Duras company took a more prominent part in Italian affairs than it had when under Alain d'Albret, and was even based at Crema after Duras became governor of this place. The Orval company stayed close by its captain, who held the important frontier governorship of Champagne from 1488 to 1524¹⁸³. Similarly

183. G.R., no. 6956.

the Aguerre company was continuously based at Mouzon, in Champagne, from the beginning of Louis XII's reign right through till Gratien's death, and Gratien d'Aguerre was governor of Mouzon. He had been governor, however, since about 1479¹⁸⁴, so that the long sojourn in Naples seems like an aberration in a career dominated by the Imperial frontier, for both captain and company. The reason why Gratien became involved in Charles VIII's expedition is not so hard to guess as the reason why he never returned to Italy under Louis XII, after such a determined performance in Naples in the 1490s - perhaps he wore himself out (he was about 50 years old even in 1494¹⁸⁵), perhaps his experience convinced him that Italy offered little but a better chance of an early grave.

How did service abroad affect the composition of these Italian-based units? The Foix company was much more susceptible to the infiltration of foreigners than was the Albret-Duras company. This latter contained no recognisable aliens as late as August 1503, whilst even in June 1507 only one Italian gendarme and two Italian archers can be identified.¹⁸⁶ 1507 was the high-point of alien penetration, and by the end of our period only one Italian

184. Jaurgain, "Profils basques", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, iv, p. 31.

185. ibid., p. 140.

186. B.N., fr. 25784, no. 82 and B.N., fr. 21507, no. 780.

archer can be picked out in the ranks of the Duras company¹⁸⁷. The Foix company presents an entirely different picture. Although Italian recruits are sometimes difficult to identify, owing to the presence of Spanish and Pyrenean names in the lists, and owing also to the tendency of treasury clerks, drawing up the muster rolls, to gallicise foreign names anyway, the trend of foreign penetration is unmistakable. In August 1492, the Foix company had just a sprinkling of aliens amongst its archers, perhaps two or three Spaniards. By February next year, the unit had acquired an Aragonese gendarme¹⁸⁸. Later, during the 1499 campaign in Lombardy, the company still contained very few recognisable foreigners, again just one or two Spanish archers¹⁸⁹. The change occurs during the period 1499 to 1503, but no muster rolls survive for this

187. Muster at Beauregard-en-Quercy (7:9:1516), B.N., fr. 21509, no. 914.

188. Musters at Lisieux (28.8.1492), B.N., Clair. 238, no. 361, and at Doullens (18:2:1493), B.N., fr. 21503, no. 495).

189. We know also that a certain gendarme serving at this time, one Michel de Rovis (?[†]) was an alien under the law, A.N., JJ. 234, no. 367. It is possible, however, that he was Béarnese or basse-Navarrese, subject of the King of Navarre, not the King of France, and such men are treated as Gascons in this study. In 1502, Louis XII had acquired all Rovis' goods in France, following the latter's death, by exercising his right of 'aubaine', by which property of foreigners, who died without heirs, escheated to the Crown, ibid., loc.cit.. Later, as part of Louis XII's attempt to establish his suzerainty over Béarn, the Parlement of Paris granted French legal status to the Béarnese, in 1505, Tucoc-Chala, La vicomté de Béarn, p. 110.

span, until that of June 1503; still the ranks of the gendarmerie have largely resisted foreign incursion, but amongst the archers there now appear eleven Albanians, a Turk, four Italians, four others who look like recruits from the peninsula, and two more foreigners of uncertain nationality¹⁹⁰. The Albanians can be definitely identified in the muster lists, because their names are normally qualified by their nationality - "Albanois". In August 1503 and January 1504, the numbers are roughly the same¹⁹¹, until by July 1505 the proportions have again increased: six to eight foreign gendarmes, and, amongst the archers, fourteen Albanians, two Turks, eight Italians, two other probable Italians, and three more foreigners¹⁹². Similar numbers are maintained through the next few years¹⁹³, until we reach the apogee of Albanian penetration in 1509-10. In August 1509, although there are only perhaps three foreign men-at-arms, there are twenty-three Albanian archers, plus a Turk, two Italians, two other probable Balkan types, and three more aliens¹⁹⁴. In March 1510, we have about six foreign gendarmes, twenty-three Albanian archers, and also in the archer ranks,

190. B.N., fr. 21506, no. 720.

191. Ibid., no. 726 and B.N., fr. 25783, no. 51.

192. B.N., Clair. 241, no. 547.

193. Ibid., no. 601; B.N., fr. 21507, nos. 765 and 775.

194. Ibid., no. 798.

three Turks, three other Italian or Balkan soldiers, and two other foreigners of some sort¹⁹⁵. We may surmise that the expulsion of the French from Italy in 1512 led many foreign recruits to foresake their adopted colours, for by September 1515, the Béarn company, now twice the size of its predecessor, the Foix company, contained perhaps nine foreign gendarmes, but only three Albanian, nine Italian, and three other foreign archers¹⁹⁶.

We can only guess at the reasons why the Foix company attracted so many local recruits in Italy. The responsibility must lie with Roger de Béarn, the effective commander of the unit throughout these years of infiltration. No doubt, once a company attracted a handful of Albanians, for example, it was not difficult to recruit more and more. Surviving muster rolls are too few to tell us whether these foreigners were recruited in small numbers or en bloc. Perhaps Béarn enrolled whole bodies of Albanians to replace heavy losses, as a result of the Garigliano campaign, for example. Certainly the French came to respect the martial qualities of stradioti in Venetian and Milanese service, after a number of campaigns in which the two were involved on opposite sides; quite soon in the Italian Wars, however, stradioti were evidently coming over to French service and from 1509 even fought against their former employer,

195. Ibid., no. 814.

196. B.N., n.a. fr. 8616, fol. 6.

Venice. Indeed, by 1509-10 almost one-quarter of Foix company archer strength was Albanian and other, non-Gascon companies must also have recruited stradioti, as well as the special units of light horse which Louis XII developed.

It is interesting that no Albanian ever became a man-at-arms in the Foix company, as far as we know, except for a certain Chevalier Baste, and possibly one Dromedes Grec. This was principally due, no doubt, to the essential nature of the stradiot, a light horseman, not dissimilar to the French archer. But other reasons suppressed the claims of archers aspiring to the gendarmerie. In the great majority of cases, archers were non-noble, and their promotion to man-at-arms was rare, in the fifteenth century at least¹⁹⁷. The division between gendarme and archer was of social as well as military importance, in the main. Did service in Italy do anything to undermine this divide? In other words, were opportunities for archers widened by the inevitably greater turnover in personnel during wartime?

There are two lines of investigation here. On the one hand there is the question of absolute numbers of

197. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société, p. 465. See annexe, v, p. 618, for promotion ratios in selected companies during the fifteenth century.

archers promoted to higher rank within the same company over a given period; we would expect this number to increase during wartime, since there were always a few promotions from the archers' ranks, and war losses would surely provide more opportunities during the given period. On the other hand, we have the issue of the relative importance of archers as a source of recruits to the gendarmerie. Would companies, fighting far from home and occasionally suffering more or less unexpected troop losses, not find themselves short of ready replacements? Hasty promotions of archers in the field might be the result. Was this what happened in the Foix company, leaving many archers' places open to the only major source of recruits on the spot, Albanians and Italians? In other words, was warfare in Italy not likely to raise the number of archer promotions qualitatively as well as absolutely?

Between its two surviving muster rolls of 1493 and 1499, the company of Gratien d'Aguerre went through the first Neapolitan campaign¹⁹⁸. Eleven to twelve of the archers of 1493 had been promoted to gendarme by 1499 - say 11% of archer strength. Between 1499 and 1510, on the other hand, during which time the unit was garrisoned in Champagne, 13% of the archers of 1499 were promoted¹⁹⁹.

198. B.N., fr. 21503, no. 499 and fr. 21505, no. 632. Only 49 men-at-arms and 99 archers mustered in 1499.

199. B.N., fr. 21508, no. 822. Only 49 gendarmes mustered here.

The numbers of places in the ranks of the gendarmerie falling vacant over these two periods are roughly similar - thirty-two and twenty-seven, respectively. In other words, it was the peaceful era of Aguerre company history which witnessed relatively greater scope for archer promotion - 35% of the gendarme vacancies between 1493 and 1499 were filled by Aguerre company archers, 48% between 1499 and 1510. Our scenario above seems to have been turned on its head.

Between 1503 and 1505, only one Albret company archer was promoted - 1% of archer strength. During this time the company fought in the costly battle of the Garigliano, and twenty-seven vacancies appeared in the gendarme ranks²⁰⁰. Between 1509 and 1515, on the other hand, a span of years of relative calm for this company, some eight to ten archers were elevated to the gendarmerie, although only twenty-four places fell vacant during the period²⁰¹. In short, during the early years of heavy fighting and relatively rapid gendarme turnover, only 4% of vacancies were filled by archers, whilst during the latter period of stability, 38% of vacancies went to promoted archers. As for the Foix company, it is difficult to find a period of peace in its career which can be adequately investigated through muster lists: between

200. B.N., fr. 21506, no. 728 and fr. 25784, no. 82. Only 42 gendarmes and 98 archers appear at the second review.

201. B.N., Clair. 241, no. 639 and B.N., fr. 25786, no. 5 (muster at Beaumont-de-Lomagne on 31st May, 1515).

1503 and 1505, it also was engaged on the Garigliano - three archers were promoted and they filled up 10% of gendarme vacancies²⁰²; between 1510 and 1515, the company also did some hard campaigning - four to six archers were promoted, representing 12% of vacancies²⁰³. From this admittedly small sample, it appears that archers stood a better chance of promotion in peacetime than in wartime. The reasons for this tendency are baffling. Certainly it was not the result of very high archer casualties in times of war, as far as can be ascertained. If we calculate the proportion of archer promotions as a percentage of all archers who survived in a given company during our sample spans, rather than simply as a percentage of all archers serving at the first date, the following figures are obtained:

Aguerre company	1493-99	- 25%
	1499-1510	- 25%
Albret-Duras company	1503-1505	- 3%
	1509-1515	- 18%
Foix-Béarn company	1503-1505	- 7%
	1510-1515	- 20%

In other words, even if an archer continued to serve in a company for some years, his chances of promotion were, by

202. B.N., fr. 21506, no. 726 and B.N., Clair. 241, no.597.

203. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 814 and B.N., n.a.fr. 8616, fol.6.

our sample, at best 25%.

Finally, it is interesting to note the relative ease of mobility within the Aguerre company, compared with the other two units. This is brought out more clearly if we look at a broader perspective: forty-nine gendarmes of the Aguerre company mustered at Mouzon in June 1510, of whom twenty-seven are known to have served in the company as archers at some stage since 1493 (plus three others perhaps, whose definite identification is difficult). Since six of the forty-nine were also gendarmes in 1493, only some thirteen to sixteen men at most can have entered this company at gendarme level between 1493 and 1510. Compare this with figures for the other two units: fifty gendarmes of the Albret-Duras company mustered in August 1509, of whom only ten or eleven are known to have served as archers in the same company, at some time since 1493 - as many as thirty-eight or nine may have come straight in as gendarmes. The fifty gendarmes of the Foix company, on the other hand, were reviewed in March 1510; only twelve are known to have served as archers since 1493; as many as thirty-eight or nine may have come straight in as gendarmes. The fifty gendarmes of the Foix company, on the other hand, were reviewed in March 1510: only twelve are known to have served as archers since 1493, and a maximum of thirty-seven had entered the gendarmerie directly. Each of these three inquiries is based upon a roughly equivalent number and range of muster lists, so

that there can be no doubt that the Aguerre company maintained less social distinction between gendarme and archer than the other two units. Perhaps this is only to be expected in a company captained by an adventurer, whose status could not compare with that of Foix or Albret, or even that of Duras and Béarn. From Gratien down, the unit probably consisted mainly of soldiers of fortune, obscure Basques whose army career was their livelihood. Perhaps this may partially explain why Charles VIII was prepared to make a gift to the company of "... twenty-five suits of armour, and fifty breastplates, with fifty helmets, adorned with fifty plumes...", after the return from Naples.²⁰⁴

* * *

The investigation of the small sample of compagnies d'ordonnance in this survey has revealed little evidence to support the contention that companies were the property of their captains - that they were little more than private armies dressed up to look like royal troops. On the contrary, Philippe Contamine is surely right when he concludes that, although only a small minority of noble families would have been represented in the ranks of the

204. B.N., p.o. 13 (dossier Aguerre), no.17.

regular army at any one time, nevertheless it was "for the King one of the essential means of disciplining his nobility, of unifying it, rewarding or maintaining it, of inculcating it with loyalty to himself²⁰⁵." Doucet, a quarter of a century earlier, said the same thing, that the standing army helped to discipline the nobility and sever it from its landed base - in other words to disorientate the class²⁰⁶. It seems probable that the export of the army to Italy helped to disorientate the nobility further. Already fairly subservient to the Crown by 1494, despite some recent but rather half-hearted treachery, the army was fashioned into a finer tool of the King's will in a foreign land, far from the domestic quarrels of its captains. Solidarity was bred by companies campaigning together in a hostile environment, where one's only real friend was the King of France, or his representative. This is not to say, however, that the Crown deliberately pursued a policy of foreign war to attain these ends - there is no evidence for such a view.

205. Contamine, op cit., p. 479.

206. Doucet, Les institutions de la France au XVIe siècle, vol. ii, p. 621. Perhaps a little too much has been made, however, of the noble complaint of 1484 that tenants had been constrained to serve outside their lord's company, on military service, Masselin, Journal, p. 667. Luchaire believed that this complaint stemmed from the military reforms of Charles VII, Alain le grand, p. 233, but it seems to have been concerned with the raising of the feudal levy - a more or less redundant institution by our period - rather than with recruitment for the regular army.

CHAPTER THREEPROFIT AND LOSS IN ITALY

An investigation of the causes of French involvement in Italy lies beyond the compass of this study, opening up as it would whole fields of dynastic, diplomatic and political history, and comprehending aspects of social, economic and cultural life in sixteenth-century Europe. One feature which would have to form part of such an investigation does, however, force its way into view: namely, the popularity or otherwise of Italian service within the French army. The influence of the search for sociological causes of great, political events has made its presence felt in the meagre historiography of our period, even though the only detailed studies of the origins of the Italian Wars are the work of nineteenth-century scholars, men whose investigative priorities lay firmly within the realms of dynastic and diplomatic research.¹ In their review of the state of the debate on problems of the Italian Wars, for example, the authors of the relevant volume of the "Clio" series on the history of Europe, remarked, some thirty years ago, that "from a social point of view, the Italian Wars could also find their

1. H.F. Delaborde, L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie (Paris, 1888) and L-G. Pélissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, 2 vols. (Paris, 1896).

explanation, if not their justification. The French nobility, brought to heel by the royal power, could no longer indulge in feudal war and its turbulence looked for an outlet in foreign adventure, reminiscent of crusades. It was significant that hardly was the era of the Italian Wars over than the Wars of Religion began²." Unfortunately, in the absence of research in this area, such an explanation, however plausible, has more to do with speculation than documented history.

It becomes evident very soon that the French expeditions to Italy will bear little comparison with the Crusades proper, or with any crusade for that matter. Apart from the obvious lack of any important religious dimension, a main point of difference between the two phenomena is that the former were not achieved as part of the expansion of a self-confident and self-conscious people, like the Crusades, or in the manner of the Normans of the eleventh century or the Castillians of the sixteenth. The French involvement in Italy was never a mass-movement, but the business of Kings and was, in the last resort, initiated and directed by them alone. Of course, there were those who willingly grasped their

2. H. Sée, A. Rébillon and E. Préclin, Le seizième siècle (Paris, 1950), p. 103.

opportunity for gain, adventure and recognition across the Alps, provided by royal policy: Louis de la Trémoille's biographer, Jean Bouchet, tells us that in 1494 many lords travelled to Italy without royal subsidy, apart from what they received from their offices in France³. Jean d'Auton notes how the promise of battle attracted young men to Lombardy in a hurry early in 1500⁴. Robert de la Marck seigneur de Fleuranges, describes how in 1510 he set off for Italy with many other young gentlemen who had been "brought up with him", and how they were joined by others at Lyons on the way⁵. Yet for the majority, less ambitious and less foot-loose, who were constrained to serve abroad by their oath of loyalty as soldiers of the King, the prospect of an expedition to Italy was often hateful.

Francesco della Casa, Florentine ambassador in France, reveals in his dispatches the unpopularity of Charles VIII's plans in 1494. No great lord and few others approved of the prospective enterprise and "to most of the gentlemen and gendarmes who had been assigned to go to Italy, it appeared that they were heading for manifest perdition and destruction". However, they were resigned

3. J. Bouchet, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in Collection... des mémoires, ed. M. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 410.

4. Auton, vol. 1, pp. 236-41.

5. Fleuranges, Histoire des choses mémorables..., in Collection... des mémoires, ed. Petitot, xvi, p. 191.

to their fate, in obedience to the King's will⁶.

Commynes tells us that when the army had reached Piacenza, support for the expedition had even weakened, whilst after the return of the bulk of the force from Naples in 1495, almost no-one was in favour of any attempt to relieve Novara, besieged by the Milanese⁷. The short-lived success of the Neapolitan enterprise did nothing to encourage support for further involvement in Italy.

Commenting on the forthcoming invasion of Lombardy, a correspondent of the Duke of Milan wrote in September 1499 that "... the French extended much ill-feeling towards that expedition, saying that Italy was their grave...⁸."

The plans for a second Neapolitan conquest in 1501 were obnoxious to council and the Queen⁹, a constant opponent of Italian adventure. Naturally, hostility was strongest following calamity and failure, particularly after the defeat of 1512, when the whole realm was weary of Italian affairs and tired of paying for them¹⁰, but even after a

6. G. Canestrini and A. Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques, vol. i, pp. 278, 292 and 306.

7. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. ii, pp. 462 and 549.

8. L-G. Péliissier, Trois relations sur la situation de la France en 1498 et 1499 (Montpellier, 1894), p. 26.

9. Machiavelli, Opere, vol. v (Milan, 1805), p. 85.

10. Bridge, A history of France, vol. iv (Oxford, 1929), p. 169; Diarii, xiv, col. 46 and xv, col. 193.

successful campaign, as in 1509 against Venice, many who came back to France dreaded a return - "the gentlemen and lords of this kingdom view nothing more odious than talk of going back to Italy", observed an envoy at Blois in December of that year¹¹. Machiavelli, writing from France in September 1510, summed up the reasons for such distaste: without exception the gentlemen of the realm were tired of Italy, where life and fortune had been lost in the past; but such objections, which had been voiced for the last ten years, never prevented an expedition, as the King's will always prevailed¹². No doubt those who remained in garrison in Lombardy through long years came to accommodate themselves to Italian service, and Milan became as reassuringly familiar as France; but this development hardly made other, more dangerous areas of the peninsula more attractive, rather the reverse¹³. After the catastrophes of 1512 and 1513, Milan itself, securely in French hands as it had been for the first decade of the sixteenth century, became again a place of

11. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., vol. 11 (Paris, 1861), p. 451.

12. Machiavelli, Opere, vol. vii (Milan, 1805), p. 280.

13. It was reported in July 1510, for example, that the French troops on campaign in the lower Po area were anxious to return to Lombardy, Diarii, x, 846.

menace: the retiring Venetian ambassador to Milan noted in 1516 that "... the French did not like Lombardy, because they said that after ten years they were expelled, with great loss, and the acquisition of the Duchy had cost the lives of so many fine gentlemen that it would have been better to remain in France and enjoy that Kingdom¹⁴."

Although we can see how strongly the fear of death weighed in the minds of those committed to serve in the peninsula, fear of inadequate payment was perhaps equally daunting. Della Casa had heard in 1494 that the troops destined for Naples would be paid a bonus, but nevertheless, the Florentine reported later that the gendarmes were unhappy with the expedition "... not so much through fear, but because they would have difficulty living in Italy on their ordinary wages¹⁵." Allowance for the increased cost of living in Lombardy was made for a proportion of its garrison, from 1510 at least, with an increment of one-third on normal wages¹⁶, although there is no evidence that the Neapolitan garrison of 1502

14. Ibid., xxiii, 168.

15. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., vol.i, pp. 306 and 311.

16. A.N., J. 910, nos. 1, 2 and 2 bis. (Milanese budgets for 1510-12). The retiring Venetian envoy to Milan, Caroldo, writing in 1520, implies that the whole Milanese garrison received such an allowance, Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. Segarizzi, vol. ii, p. 17. The increment must have been introduced after 1506, for there is no mention of it in the Milanese war-treasury accounts of 1505-6, B.N., fr. 7882, fols. 2 and 186.

received any increase¹⁷, and all surviving muster rolls of Gascon companies in Italy indicate payment only at the domestic rate of thirty livres, per lance, per month. The generous salary-increment for part of the Milanese garrison was accorded, no doubt, both as a result of popular pressure within the army and perhaps also in the interests of harmonious local relations, for the penalty of indebtedness was severe - in 1516 the former Venetian envoy in Milan commented that although "... there were no Jews, Milanese usurers charged twenty-five or thirty per cent, without the slightest compunction¹⁸."

For the majority of French gendarmes serving in Italy, however, rates of pay were the same as those to which they were entitled at home. Moreover, payment was made at similarly capricious intervals in both countries. Contamine has noted how standards of punctuality declined during the fifteenth century, until by Charles VIII's reign only one-sixth of companies were being paid on time¹⁹.

17. The Neapolitan budget for this year assigns normal, domestic rates of pay to its companies, B.N., fr. 2930, fol. 13.

18. Diarii, xxiii, col. 169.

19. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société à la fin du moyen âge, p. 505. The author points out, however, that this declining standard still remained superior to that enjoyed by French troops both before the establishment of the compagnies d'ordonnance and afterwards, in the case of soldiers outside the Grande Ordonnance.

Gendarmes were accustomed to long delays in receiving their salary in France: the Albret company is known to have been paid three or more months in arrears on at least two occasions during the 1490s, before it ever saw service in Italy, although the normal time-lag for this unit during the period 1493 to 1500 seems to have been about six weeks²⁰. As far as can be judged, this delay of about six weeks continued to be usual when the Albret company was in Italy in 1502-3. The muster lists of the Foix company, on the other hand, reveal that payment was made, on average, again some six weeks after the termination of the appropriate pay-quarter, but at irregular intervals, until 1503, irrespective of location - delays were, if anything, longer in France than in Italy. During the middle years of Louis XII's reign, however, pay-arrears became grossly over-extended. In January 1504, the Foix company received a salary-installment some three-and-a-half months late, although this delay was compounded by the unit's service on the Garigliano during the winter; but even during the years of peace that followed, the Foix company could, it seems, only expect to be paid after postponements of between three and almost five months. The two surviving muster rolls of the Albret company for this same span, 1505-7, show that this

20. Only six serviceable muster rolls of the Albret company survive for this period.

unit was paid some four to five-and-a-half months late, whilst the record of the Milanese war-treasury for this period was scarcely better, with the Fontrailles company being paid after anything between two and six months' delay in 1505-6²¹. Unfortunately, these years are not well documented in Aguerre company rolls, but this unit, fairly regularly paid after delays of about two-and-a-half months as it seems to have been for most of Louis XII's reign, when it was continuously in France, did suffer from a long postponement of five-and-a-half months in 1504. For the remainder of our period, after the aberrations of 1504-7, pay-arrears of Gascon companies appear to have settled pretty regularly around the two-month mark, although the evidence is sparse, until delays again became inconsistent and often immense under Francis I, for troops in both France and Italy.

On the whole therefore, to judge by our sample, payment of the gendarmerie was equally dilatory on both sides of the Alps. The chronological rather than the geographical factor provides perhaps a more reliable clue to the interpretation of the workings of French military finances. After all, Lombardy was scarcely more distant from Paris, the financial centre of the realm, than the outlying parts of France and, besides, had its own war-

21. B.N., fr. 7882, fols. 83 vo. and 238.

treasury to cater for at least part of its garrison. It is clear that Louis XII did something to speed-up the payment of salaries, after the often long delays of Charles VIII's reign, in line with his order that the compagnies d'ordonnance be paid promptly at the end of each quarter-year²². But the good performance of the early years obviously could not be sustained, and we have seen how the system creaked in mid-reign; the later years may have shown some improvement before evidence of gross inefficiency after 1515²³. Long delay in receiving payment was usual then, wherever a unit was stationed, but if the delays were at least regular and their length could thus be anticipated, only the first few months of service

22. B.N., fr. 25718, no. 3. Pélissier notes how the companies destined for the conquest of Lombardy in 1499 were promptly paid, in the context of the overall efficiency of the preparations for the expedition, with the four French treasurers-general establishing themselves at Lyons, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol.i, pp. 392-3.

23. For example, the Duras company was paid for the October quarter of 1515 on the 7th. September, 1516, over eight months late, B.N., fr. 21509, no. 914; for the January quarter of 1517 only on the 28th. June, three months late, B.N., Clair. 243, no. 781, and for the following April quarter as late as the 16th. March, 1518, eight-and-a-half months late, B.N., fr. 21510, no. 949. The Béarn company, on the other hand, was paid its July quarter of 1515 over three-and-a-half months late, B.N., fr. 21509, no. 901; its January quarter of 1517 almost five months late, B.N., Clair. 244, no. 789; and its July quarter following almost seven months in arrears, ibid., no. 801.

in the ranks would be difficult as a result. If payment was usually in arrears in France, it was, nonetheless, more likely to arrive at fairly regular intervals here than in Italy, where companies were more often in transit and on campaign, and where the transport of specie was frequently more difficult and sometimes impossible. Whilst the Aguerre company, more or less permanently stationed at Mouzon following its return from Naples, appears to have been able to expect payment of its wages after a reasonably constant wait of some two to two-and-a-half months for most of Louis XII's reign, the Foix and Albret-Duras companies, involved in campaigns in the peninsula, had no such guarantee. It remains difficult, however, to account for those uncommonly long and irregular delays suffered by our units in Italy between 1505 and 1507. These were comparatively peaceful years, during which the Foix, Albret and Fontrailles companies rarely strayed from their base-areas in Lombardy and Piedmont, and the reasons for the poor record of both French and Milanese treasuries during this time are unclear.

In theory, the payment of the Ordonnances should have presented few problems. Both the complement of the companies and their rate of salary were fixed factors, so that budgeting was a simple task, except in a national emergency, as in 1512 when hundreds of new lances were

raised²⁴. It was the Extraordinaire des Guerres, paymaster of foreign mercenaries and other irregular levies, which faced sudden demands which it might not be able to meet with its allocated resources. The records of the Chambre des Comptes make frequent reference to the transfer of special funds to this treasury, over and above its original budget. At times however, the Ordinaire des Guerres suffered similar financial embarrassment - in May 1500, for instance, the French treasurers of war were ordered to raise and dispatch to Lyons 30,000 gold écus as quickly as possible, for the payment of gendarmes in Italy; when the cash arrived,

24. The year 1512 was particularly difficult, for not only were 1,200 new lances raised, in view of the menace to the frontiers of the realm, but expulsion from Milan threw the maintenance of 940 more lances back onto the French finances, B.N., fr. 25719, no. 209. The composition of the new force is detailed in B.N., fr. 2928, fol. 11 (another copy in B.N., n.a. fr. 7645, fol. 343); this expansion increased the burden on the Ordinaire des Guerres to a massive 3590 lances in all. Royal orders for extra funds to pay the new levies can be found in B.N., fr. 25719, no. 174, and B.N., Clair. 155, nos. 107 and 101. Although more serious than ever before during Louis XII's reign, the situation of 1512 was not new, however, for in 1506 the raising of new companies had necessitated the transfer of more money than originally assigned to the Ordinaire des Guerres, ibid., no. 103.

Cardinal d'Amboise announced that he had secured sufficient funds from other sources and the money was used to pay troops in Burgundy and Champagne²⁵.

The reasons for such confusions are not usually apparent, but it seems that part of the trouble was the expropriation of regular-army funds to subsidise urgent commitments elsewhere: in 1511, money was transferred from the account of the Ordinaire des Guerres to pay fifty lances of the Marquis of Mantua, a French ally²⁶. In 1515, part of the cash for the April quarter was used to reward German mercenaries, and later in the year it was reported that funds for the gendarmerie had been diverted for use in pacifying the Swiss²⁷. In 1520, the retiring Venetian envoy to Milan noted that the weight of extraordinary expenditure in the Duchy was such that its revenues could not support its gendarme garrison, so that treasurers often had to come from France with money²⁸. The prompt payment of the standing army was evidently not the first priority of the Crown - a backhanded tribute

25. B.N., fr. 25718, no. 45.

26. B.N., n.a.fr. 1483, no. 26.

27. A. Spont, "Marignan et l'organisation militaire sous François I", in Revue des questions historiques, vol. lxvi (1899), pp. 59-77, p. 75.

28. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni..., ed. Segarizzi, ii, p. 16.

to its loyalty. Moreover, since urgent financial commitments were more likely to arise in Italy, it was the Italian garrison which was more liable to bear the cost.

In view of the comparative ease in budgeting for the Ordonnances however, it seems likely that delayed payment was more often to be ascribed to difficulties in the movement of cash and officials to local garrisons and campaigning armies, than to a simple lack of funds. A serious dilemma confronted the Crown: in the interests of military discipline it was obviously desirable to muster and pay troops frequently, but at the same time, the greater the frequency of review the heavier the burden on the military machine. The mediocre record of the treasuries in dealing with Gascon companies, at home and abroad, shows that even as few as four musters a year placed considerable strain on the system. One method of alleviating this pressure was to amalgamate pay-quarters. There is some evidence that this was done deliberately at times, with a view to the prospective movements of troops - we know, for example, of an undated commission to muster units in Milan, who were about to go on campaign and who were to be paid for six months²⁹. In January 1518, moreover, Francis I ordered that his companies be reviewed in May and paid for nine months, as well as in February and August or September for three months each³⁰, in an attempt, no doubt, to clear

29. B.N., fr. 5500, fol. 28.

30. B.N., fr. 2963, fol. 1.

the backlog of arrears. Indeed, commonly the amalgamation of pay-quarters simply reveals that a given company had missed its quarterly review: in April 1500, the Marshals of France instructed a commissioner to muster and pay three units in Lombardy for the previous October and January stages³¹. The Fontrailles company was paid two installments at Bra in Piedmont, on the 9th of June 1506, whilst the company of the King of Navarre was reviewed in Bigorre in January 1515, and paid for six months of the previous year at once³².

Despite this last example of a home-based unit suffering in a time of financial stringency, it was in Italy that contact with treasury clerks and commissioners was more easily lost³³. We have noted how the muster roll evidence of some Gascon companies appears to demonstrate that, broadly, payment was equally dilatory on both sides of the Alps, with perhaps the main advantage of home-service being a greater consistency of delay. Unfortunately, the distribution of surviving rolls is such

31. B.N., fr. 26106, no. 168.

32. B.N., fr. 7882, fols. 83 vo. and 238; B.N., n.a.fr. 8615, fol. 27 and B.N., Clair. 242, no. 691.

33. It was perhaps in consideration of this tendency that Louis XII drew the attention of one of his commissioners to the fact that the Foix and Albret companies were bound for Italy, when he ordered him on the 21st November, 1501, to take their musters for the previous July quarter, B.N., fr. 25718, no. 57.

that they tell us nothing of the companies' involvement during the years of hectic campaigning in northern Italy from 1510 to 1512 and in the ultimate collapse of French power in Lombardy in that year, and little of their history in Naples, either during the first expedition or in 1503³⁴. Surviving reviews of other Gascon units give us some idea of the consequences of inclusion in these campaigns - the company of Odet de Lautrec, after participating in the fighting and final débâcle in northern Italy in 1512, was paid for the first quarter of that year only on the 30th. of August, at Sens³⁵. Other evidence points to the hardship caused by delay in payment during these later years of service in Italy: in January 1511, Chaumont d'Amboise, governor of Milan, wrote to the King as follows - "The payment of the lances for the last July quarter was very late; could you order the treasurers to ensure that last October's installment be here by the 8th. of February next, for I promise you Sire that the gendarmes are impoverished and cannot obtain food without paying for it, in the places where they are stationed³⁶." It seems

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34. We only have the muster roll of the Foix company, drawn-up at Genoa on the 13th January 1504, which tells us how and by what date this unit had returned from the Garigliano disaster, B.N., fr. 25783, no. 51.
35. B.N., fr. 21508, no. 851. Lautrec's company was paid for the following quarter on the same day, B.N., Clair. 242, no. 665.
36. B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 57.

probable that the Foix and Duras companies would have been affected by these arrears. Indeed, the latter's troubles did not end here, for by September 1513, after involvement in the abortive campaign of that year in Lombardy, the Duras company was on the verge of mutiny, owing to lack of pay³⁷.

Naples afforded yet greater risks. Despite considerable embarrassment of the royal finances in 1494, it seems that all the companies in Italy were fully paid for that year³⁸. Insufficient cash was available for the first installment of 1495, however, and it appears that those units assigned to remain in Naples were given priority. The company of Louis d'Armagnac returned north with Charles VIII, for example, to be reviewed at Vercelli on the 9th. of August, and paid for the January quarter - over four months late³⁹. The Foix company no doubt suffered a comparable delay, but of the two Gascon units

37. B.N., fr. 2928, fol. 16 vo. (copy in B.N., n.a.fr. 7648, fol. 52 vo.).

38. A recent authority suggests that, thanks to Milanese aid, Charles VIII was able to pay his companies in Italy their October quarter on the first of that month, Labande-Mailfert, Charles VIII et son milieu, p. 283, n. 401. It is extremely doubtful that any company was paid so early, however - the Aubijoux unit, for instance, only received its last installment for 1494 on the 3rd. February 1495, B.N., fr. 21503, no. 536. Even so, such a delay represented comparatively prompt payment, by the standards of the time.

39. B.N., Clair. 239, no. 433. The Guise company may well have received its April quarter on the very same day, although we cannot be precise, owing to damage to the appropriate roll, B.N., fr. 21503, no. 538.

left in the south, we know that one at least, Odet Aydie's company, was paid for the January quarter as early as the 28th. of April⁴⁰. It seems likely that Aydie's company formed part of the garrison of Castel Nuovo in Naples, which surrendered on the 8th. of December 1495 and was allowed to return to France⁴¹. In other words, this unit was probably assured a fairly speedy deliverance from the Neapolitan disaster, and in 1497 it disbanded with a golden handshake of three months' wages "... to enable (the troops) to return to their homes⁴²." The company of Gratien d'Aguerre, on the other hand, had to undergo a much longer ordeal. It may well have been paid for the first quarter of 1495, but how much it received afterwards is very debateable. In view of the rapid collapse of French rule in the Kingdom of Naples after Charles VIII's departure in May, local revenues must have quickly dwindled. Indeed, a correspondent wrote to the King in April 1496 that "... since his leaving the gendarmes had not had a single payment;" they were living by requisitions on the populace. The garrison was also suffering from a lack

40. B.N., n.a.fr. 8612, fol. 1.

41. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, ii, pp. 547 and 568; A. de Boislisle, Notice biographique et historique sur Etienne de Vesc, sénéchal de Beaucaire (Paris, 1884), pp. 153 and n. 3 - 154.

42. B.N., fr. 25717, no. 207.

of military equipment, since lost or damaged items could not be replaced locally⁴³. "The gendarmes were so poor that no-one could imagine it...", writes Commynes, who later tells us that those at Atella in mid-1496 had been without salary for one-and-a-half years⁴⁴. Although the Aguerre company was no doubt with its captain in the Abruzzi at this time, its members must have been similarly impoverished - certainly without regular pay - although they might have received something of the 40,000 ducats which Commynes tells us Charles dispatched to the south⁴⁵, and which presumably arrived at Gaeta. In 1498, soon after their return from Naples, the men of the Aguerre company were granted four-and-a-half months' worth of stipend "... in favour of and recompense for service... in the Kingdom of Sicily, where they stayed for a long time, without receiving any payment...⁴⁶." Around the same time the unit also acquired some new equipment from

43. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 27. This letter has been published in Commynes, Mémoires, ed. Dupont, vol. iii, p. 437.

44. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, pp. 565 and 570.

45. Ibid., p. 566. It is not clear when this money arrived, but at all events Commynes says it was dispatched too late to be of any purpose.

46. B.N., n.a. fr. 5849, no. 520. This was meagre enough compensation if it represents all the back-pay the Aguerre company received.

the Crown⁴⁷, no doubt to replace losses sustained in Naples.

The collapse of the second French regime in Naples was attended by even greater financial disarray, since larger forces were involved. A major proportion of the garrison was assigned its salary on Neapolitan revenues, and may therefore have been regularly paid until these revenues began to be disrupted in later 1502. Even so, the company of the late Jean de St. Prest, put into the charge of Louis d'Armagnac, was only paid its third installment of 1501 after a delay of almost four months, although at this stage the unit was still the responsibility of the French treasury⁴⁸ and the long delay reflects the hangover from the recent campaign of conquest in the south. Whatever the improvement in the delivery of salaries in Naples during 1502, the amelioration was to be short-lived: by February 1503, for instance, the wages of the company of Aymar de Prie, stationed in the isolated Apulian town of Castellaneta, were over six months in arrears, owing to administrative faults, according to Jean d'Auton⁴⁹. More French troops were precipitated into the Neapolitan war after the defeat

47. B.N., p.o. 13 (dossier Aguerre), no. 17.

48. B.N., Clair. 240, no. 553; B.N., fr. 2960, fol. 15.

49. Auton, iii, p. 136.

at Cerignola, including the Foix and Albret companies. Both units were paid in August 1503, for the second quarter of that year, after an uncommonly brief delay of a month or so⁵⁰, and were hurriedly dispatched south with the rest of the relief army; the Foix company was not paid again till mid-January⁵¹ and the Albret company no doubt suffered a similar delay. Both troops were shipped to Genoa in January 1504, after the surrender of Gaeta, together with the bulk of the defeated army's cavalry; here they were well treated, according to Auton⁵², and of course we know that the Foix company was promptly paid upon arrival. Neither Jean d'Auton's testimony nor the record of payment of the Foix company accords well with the desperate correspondence of Chaumont d'Amboise in January 1504, however: "... I pray you get me a reply to all the letters I have written, especially about all these companies which have returned from Naples, and have received absolutely no payment...", he implored Louis XII's secretary, Robertet, on the 25th; Chaumont went on that it would have been better to sort out those units to be dismissed rather than to have simply abused them all. A similar complaint was dispatched to

50. B.N., fr. 21506, nos. 726 and 728.

51. B.N., fr. 25783, no. 51.

52. Auton, iiii, p. 305.

Georges d'Amboise a little later, whilst on the 31st. Chaumont wrote to the King that "... the gendarmes who had returned ... were penniless and all on foot...". The peasants of the countryside were attacking the troops for their depredations, and Chaumont was at a loss what to do, since "... some said they were due four or five quarters and it was the greatest pity imaginable...⁵³." "The King was most displeased..., both with the gendarmes who returned, whom he did not wish to see nor hear of, as well as with the treasurers," notes La Trémoille's biographer on the same subject⁵⁴. This severe attitude is confirmed by Auton, although he suggests later that Louis XII used funds recouped from peculatory financial officials to compensate poor captains.⁵⁵

If Italian service increased the risk of breakdown in the already imperfect system of payment of the regular army, it did at the same time open up wider opportunities for plunder than existed at home. Complaints against arbitrary impositions by the gendarmerie were common enough in France, but an established network of local government officials, allied to the army's own machinery of control, helped to discipline the military life. Control was generally less tight in Italy, and

53. B.N., *Mélanges de Colbert* 13, fol. 55; B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 50 (copy in *Mélanges de Colbert* 13, fol. 67); *ibid.*, fol. 43 vo..

54. Bouchet, *Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche*, p.444.

55. Auton, iii, pp. 306 and 347.

forced levies on the populace even had to be tolerated at times, to enable unpaid garrisons to subsist. The abuse of the host population by French troops was not simply a response to poverty, however, but an activity engaged in whenever possible - a perquisite of the soldier's trade; the cities of Lombardy lamented it⁵⁶ and French commanders took it for granted if proper supervision were not maintained⁵⁷. This sort of petty pilfering was only one of many opportunities for gain to be had at the expense of enemy and neutral alike, and one of the least important. After all, no-one was going to make his fortune by holding to ransom the mean household of some Italian peasant, or urban labourer or artisan. The peculiar advantage of service beyond the Alps was that Italy was a war-zone, and although rigid discipline might be enforced within a French army when on the march, this control was necessarily relaxed after a battle was won; then a marauding search for loot was unleashed, which might last for days. The military authorities provided only a feeble impediment to this activity, partly because they were unable to do more, partly because it was recognised that plunder oiled the

56. L-G. Pélissier, Documents pour l'histoire de la domination française dans le Milanais (1499-1513) (Toulouse, 1891), p. 70 (for Milan in 1502) and p. 215 (for Crema in 1509).

57. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 86.

wheels of the army.

It is difficult to find precise evidence of an individual soldier making his fortune through plunder in Italy - by its very nature the acquisition of loot is ill-documented. Perhaps the nearest thing we possess to a Gascon example is the story of the Quercian, Tardieu, a companion of Bayard in Naples in 1503, whose half-share of a Spanish money-convoy enabled him to marry a rich heiress after his return home⁵⁸. Such spectacular windfalls obviously eluded most, but at the same time, few soldiers, from generalissimo to common infantryman, would have been satisfied if a successful campaign had not yielded him his profit - only due reward, after all, for his exertions. The absence of cupidity in those paragons of contemporary knighthood, La Trémoille and Bayard, was accounted an extraordinary virtue by their biographers. The richest rewards were to be had at the expense of hostile towns and enemy castles. A city might yield to a fine, to escape the consequences of further resistance - Louis d'Armagnac exacted fines of 18,000 and 5000 ducats respectively, from the rebellious towns of Bitonto and Castellaneta, during his reign in Naples in

58. Histoire du gentil seigneur de Bayard, par le loyal serviteur, ed. Roman, p. 116. The heiress was one Françoise de St. Martin, G. Lacoste, Histoire générale de la province de Quercy, vol. iv. (Cahors, 1883), pp. 23-4.

1502-3⁵⁹, whilst in 1511 Monfalcone surrendered to Fontrailles' lieutenant, St. Blancard, and his troop, and was taxed for 500 ducats⁶⁰. The acquisition of an enemy fortress might yield a store of riches, such as those handed over to the French captains from Bologna castle, after the deliverance of this friendly city from papal occupation in 1511⁶¹. The interests of commanders were best-served by the composition of terms of surrender with a hostile town, or by the orderly distribution of loot relinquished by a defeated garrison. The rank and file stood to gain more by putting a town to the sack. Interestingly, the conflicting ambitions of captains and men came to a head at Ravenna in April 1512, following the famous battle. La Palice, the French commander after Gaston de Foix's death, negotiated for the surrender of the city of Ravenna, with the provision of money payments to all his captains; despite the conclusion of such a pact, however, the infantry succeeded in gaining entry to the place and, joined by the gendarmerie they plundered the whole town⁶².

59. Diarii, iv, cols. 477 and 840.

60. Ibid., xiii, 239.

61. Lettres de Louis XII, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1712), vol. ii, p. 249.

62. Fleuranges, Histoire des choses mémorables, p. 221.

The sack of Ravenna had been preceded by an even more monstrous affair at Brescia, in February. This was one of the richest cities in Italy and, moreover, was consigned to pillage with the sympathy of the French commander, Gaston de Foix. The breaching of Brescia's walls set off something like an immense explosion, at the centre of which men and property were consumed in a chaos of devastation, whilst debris was flung far and wide. As some three million écus' worth of loot was bled from the place, the French army all but disintegrated⁶³. Brescia was briefly turned into a great emporium for luxury goods - whilst "... plate, purple silks and furs were sold in all parts of the city by the soldiers⁶⁴", carts and mules loaded with plunder were escorted towards the west by footsoldiers and cavalry alike⁶⁵. Much of the stuff evidently found its way to Milan, to be traded there⁶⁶. Other convoys would have been threading north towards Germany, since German troops were well represented at Brescia. There is no doubt, however, that French knights took their fair share, and Fleuranges notes how "... there were gendarmes... who made such a haul that they and their children reaped the rewards all their

63. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 284.

64. Letters and papers (domestic and foreign) of the reign of Henry VIII, 2nd edition, ed. J. Brewer and R.H. Brodie, vol. i (London, 1920), pt. I, p. 518.

65. Diarii, xiii, cols. 525 and 528.

66. Ibid., xiv, 23; G.A. Prato, Storia di Milano, in A.S.I., ser. I, vol. iii (1842), p. 297. Prato notes that the purchase in Milan of looted goods from Brescia led to two years of plague in the capital, since Brescia had been infected at the time of the sack.

life⁶⁷." When the Spaniards took Trezzo from Roger de Béarn in January 1513, they found a stock of booty from both Brescia and Ravenna; in fact, Roger had amassed some 10,000 ducats in coin and 5000 in silver here⁶⁸, although by no means all of this would have been plundered from the two great cities, for Béarn had been pillaging in the Milanese during the later months of 1512⁶⁹. We may imagine that the rebellious city of Bergamo, which settled for a fine of 60,000 ducats with the French, a little after the sack of Brescia⁷⁰, felt itself mightily relieved in the circumstances.

Despite such spectacular prizes as Brescia and Ravenna, however, the staple diet of profits of war was provided by the capture of enemy soldiers, their equipment and lodgings. On rare occasions a glittering windfall might be unearthed - Fleuranges describes, for instance, how a horde of treasure, plundered from all parts of Italy, was discovered by his troops in an abbey outside Alessandria in 1513, where it had been abandoned by retreating Swiss and Spanish forces⁷¹. More commonly, victorious soldiers

67. Fleuranges, op.cit., p. 212.

68. Diarii, xv, cols. 467 and 484.

69. ibid., col. 88.

70. ibid., vol. xiv, col. 9.

71. Fleuranges, op.cit., p. 237.

had to make do with handfuls of ransom-money or with what could be stripped from a corpse or found littering the field. Only the ransoms of notable prisoners are recorded, but even so the 100 ducats' ransom which Gaston de Foix's maître d'hôtel negotiated with a captive Venetian gentleman at Brescia in 1512, or the quarter-share of the 200 ducat value of the Podestà of Casalmaggiore, to which Ste. Colombe was entitled in 1509⁷², were only equivalent to minor pensions. No doubt Ste. Colombe was to derive more from his capture of the great Venetian general, Andrea Gritti, in 1512⁷³, but important prisoners were at the disposal of the King and there is no chance that Ste. Colombe's share of Gritti's ransom approached anything like its full value. Even these relatively modest sums are put in their place by what we know to have been the usual ransom fees of the time. The Franco-Spanish convention, operating during the Neapolitan campaign in 1502-3, fixed the value of a man-at-arms at twenty-five ducats - the equivalent of about three months' pay - and that of a footsoldier at five ducats, although more could be had for officers and superior nobles, and a captor could also expect to appropriate the horse and equipment of his victim⁷⁴. Later, a Venetian officer described how he and his commander escaped death

72. Diarii, xiii, 529 and viii, 164-5. In 1509, Ste. Colombe was lieutenant of the company of Yves d'Alègre, becoming Lautrec's second-in-command in 1511, when the latter became a captain of the Ordonnance, B.N., fr. 25785, no. 161.

73. Diarii, xiii, 521-2 and xiv, 32.

74. Ibid., iv, col. 840; P. Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marchese di Pescara, trans. L. Domenichi, publ. by C. Panigada (Bari, 1931), p. 83; Auton, vol. iii, p. 110.

at the sack of Brescia by proffering fifteen and twenty-five ducat ransoms⁷⁵. Finally, if the defeat of Spaniards and Venetians yielded only modest profits, that of the Swiss was even less propitious: in 1516, the Florentine envoy to France reported on the Marignano campaign, noting that "... on other occasions when the French had undertaken successful expeditions to Italy... individuals had been enriched; but that had not occurred this time, for the Swiss were poor men and the troops had returned to France without a penny⁷⁶."

By the same token as profits of war were made, so they were lost, and new losses incurred. The balance of credit and debit is impossible to calculate in individual cases, but looking at the French army as a whole, we may safely say that for each city sacked so was a store of treasure abandoned, for each captive ransomed so was a ransom to be paid. Indeed, so unsuccessful were the French expeditions to Italy in the main, that it is difficult to believe that losses did not outweigh gains. French success was often so short-lived that the profits of war were never in fact realised. The

75. Diarii, xiii, col. 516.

76. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques, vol. ii, p. 763.

army which headed northwards from Naples in 1495 lost the bulk of its baggage at the battle of Fornovo⁷⁷; on the other hand, the garrison of Gaeta, which surrendered in 1496, embarked with three ships full of loot, but one, laden with treasure ransacked from Neapolitan churches, foundered on the journey home whilst another was captured⁷⁸. In short, we may well believe Bayard's biographer when he comments that "there were several gentlemen who brought back precious little from this Neapolitan enterprise⁷⁹." The second campaign in the south was, if anything, less profitable than the first, with the loss of the army's baggage at Cerignola and the notorious poverty of the troops who returned from Gaeta in 1504. And if the enjoyment of the fruits of Naples was almost invariably temporary, the booty accumulated in campaigns in the north was also easily lost. We have seen how Roger de Béarn was obliged to abandon his haul when he surrendered Trezzo in 1513; the treasure unearthed by Fleuranges' men near Alessandria in the same year was probably lost in the confusion of the battle of Novara a

77. Ibid., i, pp. 624-5; La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, p. 359; D. Malipiero, Annali veneti, in A.S.I., ser. I, vol. vii (1843), pt. I, p. 356.

78. Boislisle, Notice sur Etienne de Vesc, p. 169.

79. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 63.

little later⁸⁰. As defeat in Italy took its toll of plunder gained, so it left prisoners to be redeemed. Gaspard de Coligny, Louis d'Armagnac's lieutenant, who was captured at Cerignola, was one of those who was released without ransom by the terms of the surrender of Gaeta in January 1504⁸¹. It seems probable that Fontrailles, imprisoned at Venice in 1509, was also relieved of the need to purchase his freedom, being part of an exchange deal⁸². Gabriel d'Albret, seigneur de Lesparre and viceroy in Apulia in 1495, was less fortunate however; captured near Otranto in late May or early June 1495, Lesparre was ultimately exchanged the following January for the son of the commander of the papal army in Naples⁸³. In addition, 6000 ducats' ransom was to be paid, and we know that Lesparre was unable to meet the figure without help from his brother, who borrowed about a third of the sum from a fellow courtier, Germain de Bonneval. In a letter to Charles VIII of March 1496, Lesparre asked the King for consideration of his ransom, and indeed it was Charles who

80. The baggage was lost at Novara, B.N., n.a.fr. 5126, fol. 56.

81. Auton, iii, pp. 304-5.

82. Diarii, vol. ix, col. 422.

83. G. de Villeneuve, Mémoires, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, pp. 275 and 307.

reimbursed Bonneval⁸⁴.

In general, there appears to have been comparatively little opportunity to make a fortune in Italy, by means of private enterprise - the risks of loss seem to have outweighed the potential for gain. If men made profits from the sack of an Italian city, such outlets were rare and, as often as not, they were but brilliant interludes in campaigns which ended in wretched failure. Only in Lombardy, during the years of uninterrupted French rule between 1500 and 1512, was there scope for the accumulation of wealth, when a man might build on his initial success, largely free from the attentions of an enemy. But whilst these peaceful conditions removed the threat of loss, they also narrowed the prospect of gain. Lombardy was a royal duchy where most rewards were at the disposal of the King of France. If Frenchmen saw in Italy the chance for independent advancement denied them at home, their hopes must have been usually disappointed - on the whole, service across the Alps reinforced the dependence of the nobility upon the Crown, when a new range of appointments, pensions and sinecures appeared on the market. As governor and

84. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 10; (this letter of Lesparre has been published in Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. Dupont, vol. iii, p. 432); B.N., fr. 26105, no. 1243.

lieutenant-general in Milan in 1511-12, Gaston de Foix was assigned a pension, or salary, of 12,000 livres per annum, whilst Louis d'Armagnac had received a similar wage as Viceroy in Naples in 1501-2⁸⁵. Although not as large as the pensions of some of the great magnates at home, such as Alain d'Albret, this was a substantial sum and, besides, was additional to existing domestic subsidies: thus in 1502, for example, Armagnac received a total of 17,000 livres from the Crown⁸⁶, as much as Albret himself. On the other hand, the prosecution of the King's affairs no doubt involved considerable personal expenditure by both Armagnac and Foix, especially as their reigns coincided with periods of continual warfare. Foix's predecessor in Milan, Chaumont d'Amboise, adduced expense as a motive for wishing to be discharged from his post, in September 1509, when he complained that he had disbursed in five months almost the whole of his annual salary on official business⁸⁷. Nevertheless, it was believed that Chaumont's

85. A.N., J. 910, no. 2 bis.; B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 14 vo. and 19 - although only documented for 1501-2, it seems probable that Armagnac would have been assigned a similar salary the next year.

86. 12,000 livres in Naples and 5000 in France, B.N., p.o. 95, nos. 397 and 407.

87. B.N., Mélanges de Colbert 13, fol. 59 vo..

profits from Italy were not negligible, a belief which fathered the irreverent catch-phrase "Milan and Meillant"⁸⁸, his sumptuous new palace in Berry. Brantôme reckoned that Italy had made the fortune of Odet de Lautrec, governor of Milan under Francis I, and of his brother, Lescun - although of good birth, they had not been rich when they entered royal service, but Milan "... had set them both up very well"⁸⁹. Unfortunately, neither Armagnac nor Foix lived long enough to reap similar benefits.

The King's Italian revenues also provided sustenance for lesser men. On the one hand, distinguished soldiers whose companies were stationed in the peninsula were pensioned: the Milanese treasury assigned 2000 livres to Duras, 1200 to Fontrailles, 400 to Roger de Béarn and 200 to Ste. Colombe between 1510 and 1512. In Duras' case, his Milanese pension was additional to a French one of 300 livres. From 1511, Gaston de Foix's ensign, Bertrand de Béarn, received a pension of 400 livres, whilst Odet de Lautrec was assigned one of 2000 livres in 1512, aside from 3000 he took in France⁹⁰. Similar pensions had been entered in the Neapolitan budget

88. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, publ. by Mérimée and Lacour, vol. iii, p. 177.

89. Ibid., p. 206.

90. A.N., J. 910, nos. 1, 2 and 2 bis..

of 1502, although Fontrailles, with 300 livres, was the only Gascon included⁹¹. On the other hand, payments were made as salaries for the new posts which Italy afforded: Roger de Béarn was paid 600 livres a year for the captaincy of Trezzo, the same rate of wage as a captain of fifty lances, and six times as much as Béarn himself was due as governor of Soule, on the Spanish frontier. The Gascon, Guillaume de la Hicte had 1000 livres as captain of the Châtellet of Genoa. Perot d'Ognoas, a relative of Odet Aydie, received 400 livres as captain of Brivio and another 400 as an artillery commander. These were fairly large salaries, many more being of the order of 100 livres or less, such as that of one Augustin Charles, late of the Foix company and castellan of Valenza by 1511. Besides, a large proportion of those pensioned by the Milanese treasury were Italian gentlemen, whilst a number of ducal castles were donated to local magnates, so that the stock of potential appointments was necessarily diminished⁹².

The transfer of ducal castles in Lombardy leads us to the question of gifts of property in Italy to royal servants. If French soldiers had a better than equal chance of holding pensions and military posts in the peninsula, compared with the King's Italian partisans, the latter certainly predominated in the acquisition of con-

91. B.N., fr. 2930, fol. 17 vo..

92. A.N., J. 910, nos. 1, 2 and 2 bis..

fiscated or vacant estates and in the receipt of grants of land from the ducal or royal domain. Such benefits were an expected profit of conquest: following the capture of Brescia, for instance, Gaston de Foix asked Louis XII "... what his pleasure was regarding the confiscated goods to reward his captains... (who) had all served well, sparing neither funds nor thoughts for their lives⁹³." But Italians were the chief beneficiaries, certainly of the larger type of property. The reasons were perhaps two-fold: firstly, Frenchmen may well have preferred cash to fixed assets in a foreign country, particularly when the future of French rule was uncertain - the French who received property in Naples in 1495 did their best to realise its value, particularly after news of the prospective departure of Charles VIII⁹⁴. Furthermore, Frenchmen on the whole preferred land at home to its equivalent in Italy: thus in 1500 the Marshal de Gié exchanged a Milanese lordship for Château-du-Loir with Gian-Giacomo Trivulzio⁹⁵. In the second place,

93. B.N., n.a.fr. 7647, fol. 238.

94. Delaborde, L'expédition de Charles VIII, pp. 569 and 599. De Maulde notes that in 1501 also, wise men tried to cash their lands in the south, Auton, ii, p. 248, n.l. Examples of Frenchmen selling property in Italy can be found in B.N., fr. 5085, fol. 58. (the grandmaster of artillery granted permission to sell a Milanese lordship); fr. 5093, fols. 278 and 290 (sale of confiscated rebel goods by Louis d'Ars); and fr. 5500, fol. 99 (a company lieutenant selling a house outside Milan).

95. B.N., fr. 16589, fol. 307.

Italian property was a political resource which the Crown needed to distribute with care. Local allies must be encouraged by judicious patronage. If the donation of over thirty places in the realm of Naples to the Colonna family by Charles VIII was not vindicated by that clan's subsequent loyalty to France⁹⁶, then at least the generous treatment of the powerful Trivulzii in Lombardy was rather more fortunate - this family was the single most favoured group in the distribution of estates by Louis XII in the north⁹⁷, and was consistently loyal to the French cause. Away from the big business of political trading in land, a select few Frenchmen could expect to acquire handsome estates but others had to be satisfied with morsels. Charles VIII had been liberal enough in Naples where, for example, Gratien d'Aguerre was granted the county of Montorio, and also came by a newly-built galley captured in the stocks,

96. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, ii, p. 507.

97. For the favours showered on this family see Pélissier, Documents pour la domination, nos. 15 and 16; see also documents notified throughout the same author's Les sources milanaises de l'histoire de France (Paris, 1892) and Documents relatifs au règne de Louis XII et à sa politique en Italie (Montpellier, 1912). Trivulzio also received a pension in France, amounting to 10,000 livres in 1506 and 1510, for instance, B.N., fr. 23268, fols. 6 and 40; other members of his family were accorded smaller sums.

which was launched with some pomp in May 1495⁹⁸. After the second conquest of 1501, the Crown again kept only a few fiefs in the Kingdom of Naples⁹⁹, but it seems that little was granted to Frenchmen - as far as we know, even the Viceroy, Louis d'Armagnac, enjoyed only 2000 ducats, or 3500 livres on the duchy of Nola¹⁰⁰. The new French regime was anxious to keep well in hand the settlement of conflicting claims on estates in Naples and to leave sitting tenants in possession until the credentials of plaintiffs were duly investigated¹⁰¹. In 1495 the confusion of rival claims had led Charles VIII to revoke on the 16th. of March all cessions made since his arrival¹⁰². In the climate of political expediency and careful economy in which Louis XII aimed to settle his new, though much-reduced kingdom of Naples, there was little room for the territorial ambitions of the French soldier.

The acquisition of property in the realm of Naples

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98. Boislisle, op.cit., pp. 109 and 290; A. de la Vigne, Le vergier d'honneur, in Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France, ed. L. Cimber and F. Danjou, ser. I, vol. i (1834), pp. 356-7.
99. Auton, ii, p. 248, n.l. See the list of tenants and confiscations in the Abruzzi, in B.N., fr. 2926, fol. 33.
100. B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 14 vo. and 18 va..
101. Auton, ii, pièces annexes, p. 397 ('mémoire sur l'organisation du Royaume de Naples').
102. Delaborde, op.cit., p. 569.

could provide no lasting benefit anyway, owing to the short duration of French rule here, except in as much as it could be converted into exportable cash¹⁰³. In the north, gifts of land were of more permanent value, but here also Italian partisans and a favoured circle of French magnates largely cornered the market. Outstanding participants in the conquest of Milan might expect reward from the confiscated property of Sforza's supporters, and Fontrailles received 200 ducats a year rent in this way¹⁰⁴. Somewhat later, it appears, Roger de Béarn was granted the confiscated estate of the rebel, Girolamo di Corto¹⁰⁵. Even so, donations were not always without conditions, but were often used apparently as inducements to keep French soldiers in Italy: the list of gifts on rebel goods in Lombardy, drawn up in 1500, specifies that the recipients must remain in Italy for two or three years or more, and when they might wish to return to France, half the value of any sale of property was to go to the ducal treasury¹⁰⁶.

103. Gié sold lands he had received to their former owner, Alberico Caraffa, for 12,000 livres, Auton, ii, p.248, n.l.

104. Pélissier, Documents pour la domination, no. 15 ("Liste des donations faites sur les biens de rebelles confisqués" (1500)), p. 36.

105. Catalogue des actes de François I, vol. v (Paris, 1892), no. 16065.

106. Pélissier, op.cit., p. 35.

The enjoyment of the fruits of conquest was to be chiefly for those who made their career in the peninsula.

Rewards for service in Italy also took the form of straight cash payments - in 1516, for instance, Roger de Béarn received 1000 gold écus soleil "... in acknowledgment of the good and agreeable services which he had performed... against the Swiss...¹⁰⁷," in other words at the battle of Marignano. More commonly, however, this type of payment constituted compensation for losses incurred. After his return from Naples, Gratien d'Aguerre was accorded 2000 écus couronne, or 3500 livres "... to help him both maintain himself in (royal) service and cover the large expenses he had made on behalf of the late... King Charles..., particularly in the conquest of the kingdom of Sicily,whither Aguerre... had accompanied him and had stayed afterwards for a long time, and also to compensate him somewhat for his (lost) offices and pensions whilst he had been there¹⁰⁸". Already Charles VIII had granted Gratien 3330 écus soleil, or over 6000 livres to pay his debts to the Prefect of Rome¹⁰⁹, his main ally in Naples during the twilight of the first occupation. Quite often, service in Italy involved a

107. B.N., fr. 26115, no. 146.

108. B.N., p.o. 13, no. 19 and B.N., n.a.fr. 7645, fol. 315 and vo..

109. B.N., p.o. 13, no. 16.

financial outlay which royal soldiers usually expected to be made up by the Crown. Even before the outset of the first Neapolitan expedition, Gabriel d'Albret, seigneur d'Avesnes, borrowed 625 écus from Philippe de Commynes to finance his trip¹¹⁰, a remarkable transaction in view of the wealth of Gabriel's father, Alain d'Albret, but testimony to Alain's lack of ready cash¹¹¹. In a letter to Charles VIII after his release from prison, Lesparre lamented that he was penniless, and asked to be considered for his pension for the previous and present years, "... for he had not received a sou¹¹²." If compensation were not forthcoming a very dim view of royal gratitude could arise; following the collapse in Lombardy in 1512, matters came to a head - the Duke of Bourbon, summoned to Blois by Louis XII, told the King that he would gladly return to Italy, but only if he were better treated, referring to the great expense he had incurred in the latter's service there; other captains who returned from Italy at this time, including Roger de Béarn, were so incensed by Louis' disregard of their past efforts that

110. B.P., E. 157.

111. Luchaire, Alain le Grand, p. 64.

112. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 10. We know he got his pension of 2000 livres for 1496 at least, the year of his complaint, acknowledging receipt of it towards the end of May, B.N., p.o. 26, no. 380. Less than a month later, Lesparre was dead, expiring at Lyons on the 18th. June, B.N., dossiers bleus 9, p. 58.

".. if the Queen had not openly given them money they would have quit his service...; they wished the King were dead and Angoulême in his place¹¹³."

Strangely enough, despite the notoriety of his meanness during his lifetime¹¹⁴, Louis XII finally left behind him an enviable reputation for fair-dealing. The apparent contradiction is explained by the Milanese chronicler, Prato, who admits to the King's tight-fistedness but adds that this stemmed from Louis' wish to pay his troops well and not burden his subjects with excessive taxes¹¹⁵. In the long run, Louis' economy proved more popular than the impetuous generosity of Charles VIII, whose unbridled liberality necessitated the annulment of donations made to soldiers who had accompanied him to Naples, owing to lack of funds, in December 1495¹¹⁶, or the careless prodigality of Francis I, whose financial difficulties were predicted by the Florentine envoy to France¹¹⁷, and whose "... extreme

113. Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, Addenda to vol. i, (London, 1929), p. 32; ibid., i, pt. I, p. 743.

114. "The King hates spending money", was the verdict of a Florentine diplomat in 1511, Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques, ii, p. 544.

115. Prato, Storia di Milano, p. 325.

116. A.N., K. 76, no. 6.

117. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 760.

liberality", in the opinion of Trivulzio, "would drain the very blood from his veins"¹¹⁸. For Monluc, in the later part of the sixteenth century, Louis XII represented the model of fairness; Monluc had heard that not only had Louis kept a "book of honour" in which he recorded the names of the loyal servants he wished to reward, but also maintained a special coffer, full of money-bags for distribution to meritorious soldiers, enabling him to by-pass his grasping financial officials¹¹⁹. Even if this fond memory, as well as Brantôme's contention that Louis XII's companies never missed a pay-quarter¹²⁰, betray the signs of a folk-image distorted by time, they do nevertheless bear witness to the relative success with which Louis handled his army, and to the real benefits which were to be derived from royal service.

As far as the army was concerned, Italy was central to the provision of such benefits but it was not normally the direct source of bounty. French rule in the peninsula was marked by so many catastrophes that financial gains were all too easily forfeited in defeat. The key to fortune was provided by the Crown, which used

118. R. Brown, Four years at the court of Henry VIII, vol. 1 (London, 1854), p. 49.

119. Monluc, Commentaires, ed. Courteault, pp. 814-5.

120. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, vol. iii, p. 90.

the material resources of its Italian possessions to supplement French funds. The early years of the sixteenth century saw the rise to fortune of a number of Gascon soldiers, none perhaps so notable as that of Roger de Béarn, the illegitimate son of a scion of the house of Foix, Jean, seigneur de Gerderest, executed in 1488 for treason by the Queen of Navarre¹²¹; by 1515 Roger was captain of a hundred lances and seneschal of Valentinois. The efforts of two others, Jean de Durfort, seigneur de Duras, and Jean d'Astarac, seigneur de Fontrailles, were to establish their houses in the front rank for the rest of the century. An historian of the Duras family contends that Jean's functions in Italy, particularly his governorship of Crema, proved very lucrative¹²², and although the direct evidence for such an assertion appears to be wanting, the house of Duras certainly seems to have suffered from no shortage of money by 1515 - in November that year, a Venetian correspondent in Milan told how he had befriended Duras' son, "... a great French lord..., up to his eyeballs in ducats, which he was gambling away for want of a use to put them to," although he was sending to Bologna for a goshawk or falcon¹²³. In 1567 Monluc reminded Michel d'Astarac, grandson of our Fontrailles, that although his grandfather had been a valiant captain, his house had been

121. R. Antony and H. Courteault, Les testaments des derniers rois de Navarre (Toulouse-Paris, 1940), p. 41, n.3.

122. Favre, Précis historique sur la famille de Durfort-Duras, p. 50.

123. Diarii, vol. xxi, cols. 346-7.

as poor as Monluc's own, and implied that the present fortune of the Fontrailles family stemmed from Jean's union with the heiress of Castillon, whose rents had been worth 7 or 8000 livres, a marriage instigated by Louis XII¹²⁴.

At a time when the ambitions and energies of the Kings of France were turned above all towards Italy, the peninsula provided French soldiers with their greatest opportunity for advancement in royal favour and service. A young man in search of fortune looked to Italy as the scene of action, as Monluc recalled: "... he decided he wished to go (there), having heard of the fine feats of arms which commonly took place (across the Alps)¹²⁵." If wealth depended upon the goodwill of the Crown, the fortune-seeker must participate in the King's grand designs or forever remain in the shadows. The regularity with which Italian service is adduced as a justification for the grant of some office or other favour bears this out. The attempted donation of the county of Comminges to Jean de Foix-Narbonne in 1495 and the confirmation of the same man as governor of Dauphiné in 1498 are vindicated in this way¹²⁶. The grant of the right to appoint men of his own choosing to the royal offices in his lands of

124. Monluc, op.cit., p. 601.

125. ibid., p. 30.

126. Lettres de Charles VIII, vol. iv, p. 234 and supplement, p. 29; B.N., Clair. 954, p. 109.

Guise and Lunel, accorded to Louis d'Armagnac in 1496, and the licensing of two fairs a year and a weekly market in Guynot de Lauzières' towns of La Chapelle, Lauzières and Pézenas, in 1501, are similarly justified¹²⁷. A certain weight attached to the standing of a man who had served in Italy - thus, one of Charles VIII's chief servants wrote to the Chambre des Comptes from Turin in September 1495, ordering the prompt expedition of letters-patent to confirm Odet Aydie in the enjoyment of the revenue of the grenier of Libourne, and emphasising that Aydie "... was one of the King's good servants and one of those who had followed him faithfully in his Neapolitan enterprise¹²⁸." Indeed, a commendable record might prove of value years later, as in the case of Jacques de Durfort, seigneur de Deime, who was pardoned in 1518 for the murder of a vassal, in view of his Italian service, particularly at Agnadello and in the reconquest of Lombardy in 1515¹²⁹. Reward could even be reaped after death - in 1512, for example, the descendants of Raymond de Cardaillac were granted permission to embellish their coat of arms, considering their late forbear's services to the Kings of France, at home and abroad¹³⁰. In short, even though Italy may have provided

127. B.N., fr. 16589, fol. 183; A.N., JJ. 234, no. 181. Duras' son, François, was granted similar privileges for his towns in 1520, B.N., Chérin 69 (dossier Durfort), fol. 6 vo..

128. B.N., fr. 10238, no. 156.

129. B.N., p.o. 1044 (dossier Durfort), no. 346.

130. Lacoste, Histoire... de Quercy, iv, p. 35.

few fortunes, holding as it did more risks than opportunities for gain, it remained nonetheless the principal field of action in which the French soldier sought to demonstrate his loyalty to the King, in the reasonable hope of advancement in his career, if not of immediate financial profit in the peninsula itself.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASUALTIES OF WAR

In March 1495, Charles VIII wrote from Naples to his regent in France, the Duke of Bourbon, and announced triumphantly that "there was no longer any talk in Italy of the cemetery of the French."¹ The King was alluding to the notoriety of the peninsula as the historical grave of the French soldier, particularly in view of the unsuccessful Angevin and Orléanist campaigns of the fifteenth century.² Charles' optimism was premature. On the whole, for the French, the Italian Wars became bloodier as they grew older, and as they drew in every major power in Europe, save the Turk. At the same time, it seems likely that the proportion of French blood contributed by the gendarmerie - a proportion which was never very great anyway - decreased as time went on. Apart from the protective advantages which his armour, his steed (especially in a rout) and indeed his status and worth gave the gendarme over his inferior colleague on

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1. J. de la Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, p. 215. The expression was something of a platitude; there is reference to Anne of Brittany using it in Diarii, vol. 11, col. 768.
 2. For a brief catalogue of French defeats in Italy in the mid-fifteenth century, see M.E. Mallett, Mercenaries and their masters (London, 1974), pp. 233-4. An account of the careers of three Gascon adventurers in Italy, in earlier periods, can be found in P. Durrieu, Les Gascons en Italie (Auch, 1885).

foot, the evolution of French tactics over the years ended by effectively withdrawing the heavily-armoured horseman from his traditional role as the battering-ram of the army. We can gauge this evolution by looking at the two battles of Cerignola and Ravenna, at both of which the French command was faced by the same tactical circumstances: whilst in 1503 the gendarmerie was hurled against the enemy line from the first, nine years later it was only committed after the hostile position had been thoroughly mauled by artillery and infantry-assault. Bayard, from the depths of his despair over the French losses at Ravenna, thought that the nation would not recover in a century,³ yet deaths amongst French men-at-arms at the battle totalled only about one hundred⁴, in this the biggest and bloodiest encounter of our period. Indeed, Bayard's pessimistic prediction is a measure of the sort of losses which contemporary, genteel opinion must have considered intolerable - it was not so much the thousands of dead footsoldiers whom he lamented (many of whom were Germans anyway) but the comparatively few men of quality who had fallen.

3. Le loyal serviteur, Histoire du gentil seigneur de Bayard, ed. Roman, p. 434.

4. This is the estimate of a Burgundian eye-witness, B.N., n.a.fr. 5126, fol.55.

As in all wars, casualties did not result only from enemy action, of course. The toll taken by those traditional scourges of the soldier, disease, exposure and neglect, in addition to less obvious depredations, from accidents to the activities of vengeful mobs in town and countryside, increased an army's woes. Here again, however, the gendarme surely suffered less severely than his low-born comrade. He was richer and could afford to eat and clothe himself when conditions deteriorated and his lesser colleague starved and froze; he was no doubt better fed and housed at the best of times, and consequently less susceptible to disease; he was attended by personal servants who protected and cared for him; and finally, the Crown itself was quicker to relieve the distress of its gendarmerie than its infantry, whose soldiering, after all, had more to do with the baseness of a mercenary life than the honour of a noble calling. In January 1504, it was the remnant of the defeated army's foot, many of whom were Swiss, which was left to make its own way back from Naples overland, as best it could, whilst the cavalry was evacuated by sea.

It will not do to belittle the dangers which faced the regular army in Italy, however. The gendarme's greater immunity to the perils of war, compared with his footsoldier colleague, was the result of natural and technical advantages rather than of any relative deficiency in morale - in other words, the man-at-arms was no less brave in the face of danger than his comrade, perhaps even

the reverse. How can we attempt to evaluate the impact of these dangers? Literary evidence and contemporary correspondence give us more or less accurate casualty figures for particular battles and campaigns, but even if we possess precise details of the size of contending forces, the conditions and duration of battle, the proportion of casualties borne by particular sections of the armies involved and the way those casualties were inflicted, such figures remain somewhat unreal. We must isolate small groups of men who regularly lived and fought together, and try to determine the impact of battle upon them. The muster lists of the compagnies d'ordonnance provide us with such an opportunity, which we may take by correlating rates of turnover in the personnel of a given company with its career. Admittedly, this is a most imperfect approach - surviving muster rolls are few and far between and they give us no indication of the fate of a departed soldier anyway. But if this means that we have no hope of establishing even fairly precise casualty-rates in particular units, details of our companies' history, and of the circumstances of the actions in which they were engaged, are sufficiently well known, and the range of their surviving muster rolls sufficiently broad, to enable us to construct some interesting comparisons and connections.

In the winter of 1497-8, Gratien d'Aguerre returned with his company to France, after some three years'

campaigning in southern Italy: of the 50 men-at-arms of his unit who had been serving when it was mustered in April 1493, only 17 remained in the review of April 1499, with one more still in the company as an archer⁵. These statistics represent an extraordinary rate of turnover, compared with the subsequent history of the Aguerre company. In May 1507, when it was again reviewed⁶, 37 of the gendarmes of 1499 appear in the list. In December 1514, a further muster roll⁷ shows that 28 of the men-at-arms serving in 1507 were still with the company. In other words, during the first span, of six years, Aguerre's company lost 64% of its original gendarme strength; over the second period, eight years in length, only 25%; and during the last span, of seven-and-a-half years, the company lost 44% of its original complement. We may reasonably ascribe the uncommonly heavy turnover in personnel within this Basque company between 1493 and 1499 to its service in Naples during most of this period. The Aguerre company appears to have been the longest-serving French unit in the south of Italy during the first Neapolitan expedition. In April 1496 the governor of Taranto wrote to Charles VIII, describing the casualties amongst the troops left in the south after the King's departure: "Sire", he began, "you would do well to send

5. B.N., fr. 21503, no. 499 and 21505, no. 632. Only forty-nine gendarmes appear in the latter list.

6. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 779.

7. B.N., fr. 25785, no. 220.

us four or five hundred young gentlemen to fill our companies, for most of the Frenchmen who remained here are dead...⁸." Gratien's unit may have suffered less heavily than others; perhaps the provision of twenty-five suits of armour to Aguerre's company in 1498⁹, only half the quantity of equipment needed to refurbish its gendarmerie, when at full strength, gives some indication of the number of Gratien's men who had ceased to serve by the time the unit returned to France. On the other hand, it seems probable that, likewise, about half the company's gendarmerie at least came back from Italy and in a fit state to continue military service. The Aguerre company was never to return to the peninsula, but was consigned to garrison duties on the frontiers of Champagne for the remainder of its existence.

The period covering the Aguerre company's service in Naples also witnessed a high rate of turnover amongst the unit's archers. Between the reviews of 1493 and 1499, the company lost 70% of its archers, although this proportion includes 11 or 12% who were promoted within the company between the two dates. On the other hand, between 1499 and a muster of June 1510¹⁰, only 61% of archers disappeared (including 13% promoted). In other words, over six years, mostly spent in Naples,

8. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 27.

9. B.N., p.o.13 (dossier Aguerre), no.17.

10. B.N., fr. 21508, no. 822.

Aguerre's company as a whole lost about 58% of its original complement of archers, whilst over eleven years of garrison duty in Champagne, only 48% was lost. Lastly it might be noted that both gendarmes and archers of the Aguerre company had roughly equivalent turnover rates during the period dominated by service in Naples. Although it is true that this analysis of muster lists provides no clear indication of the number of Aguerre-company members lost to the army as a result of service in Italy, its findings nevertheless furnish circumstantial evidence of a fairly heavy war-toll.

Unfortunately, the distribution of surviving records is such that we are unable to obtain any clear picture of changes in personnel within the other Gascon companies which participated in Charles VIII's expedition, over the period in question. We know, however, that the Armagnac company of forty lances, which was reviewed at Vercelli in August 1495, soon after its retreat from Naples with the King and its service at the battle of Fornovo, mustered at full strength. As this unit's pay was so far in arrears, it was reviewed again at the same place, on the same day or soon afterwards.¹¹ Between the two reviews at Vercelli, eight gendarmes left the ranks, a remarkably high turnover in so short a span - after all, between October 1492¹² and August 1495 the

11. B.N., Clair. 239, no. 433 and fr. 21503, no. 538.

12. B.N., fr. 25782, no. 114.

Armagnac company lost only twice as many members of its original complement of men-at-arms. The turnover amongst archers between the two reviews of 1495, on the other hand, was appreciably lower, although damage to the manuscripts precludes a precise evaluation. Furthermore, the lack of other extant muster rolls for this company means that little can be deduced from our figures by means of comparison with other periods, but it is possible that the relatively heavy loss of gendarmes in 1495 betrays the imprint of the first Neapolitan campaign. The retreat from Naples in 1495 was, if not costly in life, at least a strain on morale and perhaps health: a correspondent wrote home from Asti in July and told of his pity for "the poor gendarmes", with their rusted armour and exhausted horses - for everyone the fifty-six-day march northwards had been a thing of "great trouble, woe and worry".¹³

During the second Neapolitan war, two Gascon companies whose composition is fairly well documented took part in the Garigliano campaign of 1503. A modern authority estimates the total of French deaths in this affair at between three and four thousand¹⁴. In early

13. La Pilorgerie, op.cit., p.359.

14. C. Oman, The art of war in the XVith century (London, 1937), p. 126.

December, Machiavelli in Rome had reported that there were no longer 900 fit gendarmes in the French camp¹⁵. A few days later, it was announced from Milan that 3000 French had perished to date in the realm of Naples¹⁶, an estimate which seems to include all casualties since 1501. In addition, horses in particular suffered on the Garigliano, with nothing to eat but olive leaves¹⁷. The enemy commander, Gonzalo de Córdoba, reckoned that whilst the French army had contained 1500 men-at-arms and 8000 foot at the opening of the battle, only 200 and 600 respectively were left by the 28th of December¹⁸. The Spaniard's figures appear to refer to the numbers of troops who were in position on the right bank of the river when he attacked across it on the 28th. Owing to the foul weather, most of the French had retreated to find shelter, the cavalry in Traietto and Fundi¹⁹, and since also most of the cavalry horses were dead by the end of December, only 200 odd gendarmes remained to face the enemy²⁰. It was the infantry, however, which underwent the greater privation; two-thirds had perished even before the final Spanish

15. N. Machiavelli, Opere, vol. vii (Milan, 1805), p.162.

16. Diarii, vol. v, col. 590.

17. Ibid., cols. 485 and 505.

18. Ibid., col. 713.

19. P. Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marquese di Pescara, publ. by Panigada, p. 141.

20. Auton, vol. iii, pp. 297-9.

assault, according to Jean d'Auton²¹. Many others were obliged to trudge northwards, after the surrender of Gaeta on New Year's Day, on the long road to Rome - from here it was reported on the 8th of January that soldiers were arriving "... destitute and naked, who buried themselves up to the neck in dung-heaps, to escape the cold."²² The Roman populace only screamed abuse at these hundreds of miserable refugees who were dying of exposure and hunger, although a handful of synpathetic Cardinals managed to embark the survivors by sea for France²³.

Perhaps the greater part of the defeated army, certainly all or most of the gendarmerie, was shipped directly from Gaeta to Genoa. Amongst these more fortunate survivors were accounted the companies of Foix and Albret. The roll of the muster and review of the first of these two units, held at Genoa on the 13th of January 1504, is preserved²⁴: of the fifty lances, 49 gendarmes and 98 archers appear in the list, virtually a full complement. Payment at Genoa was being made for the July quarter of 1503, well before the battle, so that all these men survived their ordeal on the Garigliano (given that they had all actually served there, which seems probable) -

21. Ibid., pp. 293 and 297.

22. Diarii, v, col. 696.

23. Ibid., cols. 695-6 and 722.

24. B.N., fr. 25783, no. 51.

at most, the Foix company lost one man-at-arms as an immediate consequence of the battle²⁵. However, between 1504 and the next surviving roll, of July 1505²⁶, there occurred a remarkable shake-out of personnel. Only 21 gendarmes from Genoa appear again in that review, one-and-a-half years later - a ratio of turnover of about 56%, which compares with one of only 70% between the musters of February 1499 and August 1503²⁷, a period of almost four-and-a-half years, during part of which the Foix company went through the first Milanese campaign. On the other hand, between 1505 and our next muster, of New Year's Day 1507²⁸, only eight gendarmes leave the ranks, a proportion of just 16%, over a comparable period of one-and-a-half years. In other words, we have two spans of years of similarly peaceful conditions, one of nineteen, the other of seventeen months' duration, during which the

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25. The persistent practice of paying troops in arrears makes the interpretation of muster rolls a little confusing. When the Foix company was reviewed in August 1503, for the April quarter, one of the men-at-arms later paid at Genoa for the following quarter was absent, another man being in his place; in other words, a given muster list does not necessarily record the names of soldiers actually serving with a company at the time of review, rather those serving during the pay-quarter in question. In practice, however, a soldier would have had to remain with his company after termination of his contract, in order to attend muster and receive his back-pay, thus in effect providing the Crown with any amount of gratuitous service.
26. B.N., Clair.241, no. 597.
27. B.N., fr. 21505, no. 627 and 21506, no. 726.
28. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 775.

Foix company lost 28 and 8 gendarmes respectively. The evidence for Garigliano casualties is surely unmistakable - Foix's men-at-arms may not have died in the swamps south of Gaeta in December 1503, but it appears that many were induced to quit serving after their return north, perhaps through illness above all.

The Albret company was reviewed in Lombardy in August 1503 and again in July 1505²⁹. Only 18 of the gendarmes who mustered in 1503 were still present at the later date, although by this stage the effective strength of the unit was down to 42 men. This turnover of 57% over a period of about two years is markedly higher than that of 31% which is revealed between this company's reviews of June 1498 and February 1502³⁰, a span nearly twice as long. During this earlier period, the Albret company saw little or no war service, but was usually to be found on garrison duty on the frontiers of France. By contrast, however, the period of one-and-a-half years between the musters of February 1502 and August 1503 saw Albret's company lose 23 gendarmes, or 46% of original strength. The reasons for such an abnormally high level of replacement during these months are not obvious - the

29. B.N., fr. 21506, no. 728 and fr. 25784, no. 82.

30. B.N., fr. 21504, no. 607 and fr. 25783, no. 41. Only forty-nine gendarmes appear at the earlier date.

unit did not apparently see active service during this time. Perhaps the resignation of the company lieutenant, Raymond de Cardailhac, which took place at some stage during this period, brought in its train a number of others, of members of the company who were attached to him. At all events, such an unexpectedly high level of turnover does serve to remind us of the need for caution in ascribing disappearances in the ranks to casualties of war, or indeed to any other cause. Nevertheless, for the two years between the Albret company reviews of 1505 and 1507³¹, the turnover of gendarmes declines again to 19%. The surprising loss during 1502-3 notwithstanding therefore, the muster rolls of Albret's company appear to confirm expectations of substantial losses for participants on the Garigliano. The impact of the battle is surely revealed also in the case of the archers of both Albret and Foix companies. Only 29 of the former's one hundred archers of 1503 survive until 1505, with one more promoted to the gendarmerie; on the other hand, 75 or 76 of the ninety-eight of 1505 turn up again two years later, with three others promoted. These figures represent turnover proportions of 69 and 21% respectively. The Foix company lost fewer archers between 1503 and 1505, as between 42 and 45 of the original complement appeared at the later date, with three men promoted; this ratio of 53% or so is still substantially higher than that of only 26% for

31. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 780. Only forty-seven gendarmes mustered in 1507.

the years 1505 to 1507, however.

We know that both the Foix and Albret-Duras companies were normally to be found in Italy during the middle years of Louis XII's reign. Until 1509 however, warfare in the peninsula was only intermittent; but from this date onwards, the intensity of fighting gradually increased to reach its climax in 1512 at the battle of Ravenna. The composition of our two Gascon units is not particularly well documented for this period, but such as it is, the evidence appears to indicate that neither company again suffered as badly as it had in the aftermath of the Garigliano campaign. The low rates of turnover during the relatively peaceful years 1505-7 have been noted above. Between its review in 1507 and its next known muster, of August 1509³², the Albret-Duras company took part in the early stages of the campaign against Venetian-held Lombardy, and although there is no definitive evidence that it fought at the Battle of Agnadello on the 14th of May 1509, the company was certainly part of the French army assembling in preparation for the coming offensive, to the west of the Adda in April³³. We must surely presume therefore that this unit did serve at

32. B.N., Clair. 241, no. 639.

33. The unit was reported to be at Lodi on the 13th of April, Diarii, vol. viii, col. 92.

Agnadello, but even so the muster roll of 1509, which covers the pay-quarter April to June, shows that the company suffered no casualties amongst its men-at-arms; amongst the archers, one man left towards the end of June and another on the 14th of May, almost certainly a battle casualty. Indeed, the period of almost two-and-a-quarter years between the two Albret-Duras company reviews of 1507 and 1509 witnessed a turnover amongst the gendarmerie of only 15%.

Again it seems highly probable that the Foix company fought at Agnadello³⁴, an assumption strengthened by the knowledge that three of its men-at-arms left the ranks on the 14th of May 1509³⁵. The French army included a total of some 2300 gendarmes, of whom about fifty died and many were wounded, but since the vanguard of some 600 lances was the only body of horse which really engaged the enemy³⁶, the bulk of the losses must have been

34. This unit was reported to be at Trezzo on the 13th of April, although the same report puts another "Foix company" at Cassano and eighty more lances of "Foix" at Melzo, *ibid.*, cols. 91-2. The fifty lances reported at Trezzo no doubt represent the veritable Foix company, but the French army was concentrating for its offensive all along the Adda in April anyway.

35. Muster at Peschiera (29:8:1509) for the previous April quarter, B.N., fr. 21507, no. 798.

36. Bridge, *A history of France*, vol. iv, pp. 24 and 30-4; P. Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana* (1952), p. 464.

borne by this force. Nevertheless, the battle of Agnadello proved to be a relatively costly victory for the French cavalry, and both our companies appear to have escaped lightly enough in the circumstances, although two of Foix's gendarmes and seven of his archers left the ranks at the end of May, departures which perhaps betray the after-effects of the battle and subsequent drive eastwards. In fact the turnover of gendarmes in the Foix company during these middle years was much higher than that in its fellow unit, 48% leaving between the musters of January 1507 and August 1509. No doubt this is partly to be expected, since the span is longer by nearly six months than the one used to measure turnover in the Albret-Duras company, and besides includes that period when the Foix company was involved in the Genoese expedition of the spring of 1507. Even after considering these factors, however, and also allowing for the probability that the Foix company suffered a few casualties during the Agnadello campaign, the rate of turnover in this unit seems rather high in comparison with the Albret-Duras company, especially as all available indications suggest that the careers of the two units were not dissimilar during the period 1507 to 1509. It seems likely that the high rate of turnover amongst gendarmes of the Foix company, during these years of almost continual duty in Italy, had more to do with the type of recruit acquired by the unit at this time than with any particularly severe demands imposed by campaigning.

In the late summer of 1509, Roger de Béarn led part of the Foix company to the siege of Padua, as part of the force of French cavalry under La Palice, designated by Louis XII to help the Emperor Maximilian I retake the city from the Venetians³⁷. Twelve of Foix's men-at-arms who mustered at Peschiera in August 1509 had left the ranks by the time of this unit's next known review, of March 1510³⁸, most of them in November or December 1509 - again a remarkable rate of loss, but not readily attributable to the siege of Padua which, although long, was hardly gruelling³⁹. It is interesting, however, to find that nine of those gendarmes who left were comparatively recent recruits to the Foix company, having been first signalled in the muster roll of 1509; in other words the losses of 1509-10 were largely confined to short-service soldiers. The Foix company maintained a core of veterans even during a period of heavy replacement - almost half its gendarmerie, 23 men, continued in service between the musters of 1507 and 1510; in fact as many as 21 of these figure in the roll of July 1505. Unless we believe that new recruits were more liable to become casualties of war than their more established

37. *Le loyal serviteur*, op.cit., p. 149.

38. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 814.

39. *Le loyal serviteur*, op.cit., pp. 156-87.

comrades, we obviously cannot ascribe the comparatively heavy rate of turnover in the Foix company during the middle years of Louis XII's reign to death and wounding in battle. The majority of losses were of men none too strongly attached to the company, often foreigners recruited in Italy, who resigned to take up other employment. At the same time, Foix, and more particularly his lieutenant, Roger de Béarn, the effective leader of the unit, maintained a group of long-service veterans, the foundation of the company's solidarity and identity, who were for the most part Béarnese and Basques. The proportion of long-service men-at-arms remained substantially lower in the Foix company than in that of Albret-Duras, nonetheless; over the four years or so between July 1505 and August 1509, the Foix company retained 48% of its gendarmes, the Albret-Duras 71%⁴⁰.

No Foix or Duras company muster lists survive for the last few years of Louis XII's occupation of Lombardy. Only in 1515 do we again have the chance to scrutinise their personnel, when both units were reviewed

40. The fact that in the case of the latter company this calculation rests on a base of only forty-two men-at-arms for 1505, the unit being depleted somewhat at the time, may serve to over-emphasise the relative solidarity of this company a little, but even if this is indeed the effect, there obviously remains a substantial difference between our two units. Besides, since the Albret company also underwent a change of command during this period, the continuity in service of its members is all the more notable.

in September, shortly before the battle of Marignano⁴¹. Whilst the turnover amongst Duras' gendarmes between 1509 and 1515 was only 48%, that in the Foix-Béarn company over a slighter shorter time-span was as high as 74%. This higher rate of loss is reflected amongst the archers - between fifteen and seventeen of Foix's archers of 1510 survive till 1515, with four to six more having been promoted to the gendarmerie; the Duras company retains forty-two or three of its archers of 1509, with eight to ten promotees. It seems probable that Foix's much heavier loss of archers can be partially explained by the resignation of many Albanians and Italians (important constituents in the ranks of his company) presumably in 1512, following the expulsion from Lombardy. We have noted also how the Foix company attracted a number of foreign men-at-arms who were usually attached to the unit only temporarily, as well as other short-service recruits. However, since such men tended to replace each other continually, leaving a more or less inviolable core of veterans serving for years, we must look to the different careers of the Foix-Béarn and Duras companies to help explain their widely different levels of gendarme turnover

41. B.N., n.a.fr. 8616, fol. 6 (Béarn company, now 100 lances strong) and B.N., Clair. 243, no. 729 (Duras company).

between 1509/10 and 1515.

The Duras company was apparently usually to be found in garrison at Crema until 1512. We do know however that this unit formed part of La Palice's detachment, co-operating with the Imperialists to the east of the Adige in 1511⁴². The army suffered considerable deprivation, La Palice himself reporting at the beginning of October that "there were so many ill that it was a great pity⁴³," and the Florentine ambassador to Milan predicting a little later that all would perish if victuals were not brought from Friuli, for from Treviso to Verona the land was "plundered and almost empty⁴⁴." By the time that La Palice had retreated to Verona, a Venetian informant could observe that the Duras company had only 22 men-at-arms left in the ranks⁴⁵, and indeed the Florentine envoy had reported earlier that La Palice's army had lost over eighty men-at-arms dead from fever and others who had deserted, so that the original complement of 1200 lances had surely been greatly diminished⁴⁶. Quite obviously, the Duras company can have lost nothing like the number of gendarmes implied by the remarks of our Venetian informant, at least not

42. Diarii, vol. xiii, col. 243.

43. Lettres de Louis XII (Brussels, 1712), vol. iii, p.62.

44. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, ii, p. 537.

45. Diarii, xiii, col. 245.

46. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, p. 538.

permanently, but La Palice's campaign may nonetheless have been its most costly operation between 1509 and 1515; for the company escaped the severities of Gaston de Foix's offensive of early 1512, being faced only with a siege at Crema by a Venetian army, with local support, later in the year, from which Duras' company emerged relatively unscathed. It seems probable that the company fought at Novara in 1513, but although a defeat for the French, this battle claimed few lives amongst the gendarmerie, which was scarcely engaged with the enemy⁴⁷.

After involvement in the indecisive campaigning of 1510-11, the Foix company followed its illustrious captain in most of his movements during the spectacular offensive which ended at Ravenna. It is probable that the unit participated in the recapture of Brescia in February 1512⁴⁸, where losses were heavy, certainly more than the fifty dead suggested by Bayard's biographer⁴⁹.

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47. A Venetian source notes the Duras company as part of the French army of invasion, Diarii, vol. xvi, cols. 213-4 and 319-20. Losses were negligible according to Fleuranges, in Histoire des choses mémorables, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xvi, p. 247.
48. The bulk of the French field army followed Gaston de Foix from Bologna to Brescia, and Bayard's biographer seems to imply the Foix company's presence at the siege, le loyal serviteur, Histoire de... Bayard, p. 280.
49. Ibid., p. 284. The most conservative Venetian estimate puts the total of dead gendarmes alone at 180, Diarii, xiii, col. 522, although of course Venetian sources would tend to inflate French losses. Fleuranges notes that a Gascon gentleman, a cousin of Gaston's, was killed at Brescia, op.cit., p.211.

In April, the company fought at the battle of Ravenna, and here again casualties were comparatively high, especially for a victory - perhaps a hundred dead⁵⁰.

The Foix company bore its fair share of the toll: the day before the battle, a prominent man-at-arms of the unit had an arm shot off by cannon-fire in a raid on the enemy's camp, whilst others fell in the main engagement⁵¹, including Gaston de Foix himself. By mid-July 1512, a report from Alessandria could note that the Foix company was reduced to twenty-five lances, out of fifty⁵², although it is difficult to have much confidence in this information, owing to an obscurity in the text and to the fact that we know the Foix company to have been 100 lances strong by 1512. Perhaps a proportion of the company

50. B.N., n.a.fr. 5126, fol. 55. Oman notes that French losses were almost entirely borne by the infantry and light horse, The art of war in the XVIth century, p. 147.

51. The man who lost his arm was Bazillac, called Pierre, baron de Bazillac by Roman but entered in company rolls as Emery de Bazillac, le loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 308 and n.1. The company formed part of the "battle" of the French army, ibid., p. 433, and was evidently heavily engaged, ibid., pp. 320-2 and 433. Bayard's biographer makes references to the fate of one of Foix's gendarmes, who had his brains blown out by gunfire, ibid., p. 322.

52. Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, vol.1, part I, p. 598.

retreated with Roger de Béarn to Trezzo, which held fifty horse, according to Venetian information in August⁵³. At all events, the Béarn company took part in the battles of Novara and Guinegate in 1513, although neither was particularly taxing. In fact, at least fourteen of the Foix company men-at-arms who had mustered in 1510 survived through to 1515⁵⁴. Only five of these fourteen were veterans of 1505 however, but five others are first signalled at the review of 1510 itself. In other words, although the Foix-Béarn company was by no means annihilated during its turbulent career in the later years of Louis XII's reign, these years - and probably one in particular, the year 1512 - did see the almost total break-up of that core of long-service gendarmes which had formed the backbone of the Foix company for so many years.

Some days after their musters of September 1515, both the Béarn and Duras companies fought at the two-day battle of Marignano, another bloody encounter like Ravenna - perhaps even a Pyrrhic victory⁵⁵. Both units were again

53. Diarii, xiv, col. 576.

54. This figure includes one man who appears in the muster list of May 1515, B.N., fr. 21509, no. 879, but who has left by the September review. The roll of the May muster is damaged, and hence is not totally reliable as a basis for calculation.

55. Spont, "Marignan et l'organisation militaire sous François Ier.," in Revue des Questions Historiques, vol. lxvi, p. 71.

reviewed the next year⁵⁶, the Béarn company a little over four months after its muster of the previous September, during which time about 11 men-at-arms had quit serving, out of one hundred; the Duras company, on the other hand, lost only 5 men-at-arms between September 1515 and its review of almost exactly a year later. If losses suffered at Marignano are hidden within these statistics they were obviously rather small, especially as, in the case of Béarn's company, whose muster of 1516 covers the period of service at the battle, at least ten of the eleven departures took place before the confrontation. A participant at Marignano wrote, with a hint of pride, that nearly everyone on the French side had been wounded - or at least his horse had been⁵⁷; it is not difficult to see why the writer felt he had to qualify his claim.

We are brought back to our earlier remarks, that the gendarmerie suffered disproportionately low casualties in Italy, compared with footsoldiers. Although that reckless courage commonly associated with the French cavalry was no fiction, being amply demonstrated at Cerignola in 1503 for instance, it was nevertheless

56. B.N., fr. 21509, no. 901 (Béarn company) and no. 914 (Duras company); the Béarn company muster list is slightly damaged.

57. B.N., fr. 3925, fol. 87.

exhausted in the face of setbacks. It is after all much easier to accept the inevitability of losses in the confidence of ultimate victory and of an opportunity to display one's prowess, than in the dread apprehension of an uneven contest with fieldworks and firearms. Careless bravura could not be indefinitely sustained amongst the changing conditions of warfare in Italy. In consequence, despite the increasing size of armies and the growing ferocity of their weapons during the Italian wars, the gendarmerie's losses did not rise apace.

The Béarn and Duras companies which accompanied Francis I to Lombardy in 1515 bore scant resemblance to their former selves of the opening years of the reign of Louis XII: the Béarn unit retained only one member of the gendarme complement of 1499, the captain himself, and the Duras company just three of its men of 1498. Soldiers left the companies at almost every measurable stage in their history during these periods, but the rates of loss were by no means steady. If one stage stands out particularly in the evolution of both units it is the span 1503-1505, the period of the Garigliano campaign and, more significantly, as we have seen, of its aftermath. When our companies were reviewed in 1503, the Foix still had fifteen men-at-arms of its original complement of 1499, and the Albret eighteen of those of 1498: by 1505, eleven and ten of these veterans respectively had disappeared. Between 1505 and 1509, the Foix company lost no more veterans, and

the Albret-Duras only three. The soldiers of both companies who survived the span 1503-5 had a good chance of remaining in the ranks for the next few years - from amongst the twenty-one gendarmes of Foix's unit who did so, twelve still served in 1509, and from amongst Albret's eighteen, as many as fifteen are still to be found in the ranks. We might almost say that the old companies of the 1490s, of Jean de Foix-Narbonne and Alain d'Albret, were finally destroyed at the Garigliano, and subsequently reborn. The reborn Albret company, inherited by Jean de Durfort-Duras, survived in large measure through till 1515, with almost 40% of its gendarme complement of 1505 still serving ten years later. The Foix company, by contrast, was liquidated for a second time, with only 10% of its 1505 complement surviving to 1515. Yet this second destruction, achieved over years of campaigning in northern Italy and France, years which saw the Foix-Béarn company involved in the exhausting offensive of Gaston de Foix, the collapse of the summer of 1512, the battles of Novara and Guinegate, and much more besides, was not much more devastating than the impact of one winter battle in Naples. The Garigliano campaign assuredly represents a special turning-point in the careers of our two Gascon compagnies d'ordonnance.

The prospect of capture and imprisonment was perhaps a more insistent menace than that of death or

mutilation in battle. If only two prominent Gascon soldiers, Louis d'Armagnac and Gaston de Foix, were killed in action during our period, the threat of capture was more commonly realised. Treatment of French prisoners varied a great deal, but at least no man of quality is known to have been murdered after capture, nor to have otherwise died in an enemy cell. This is somewhat surprising, in view of the rough treatment sometimes dealt out by the French to their victims. After the battle of Fornovo, Commynes, negotiating with the Marquis of Mantua for a truce, was embarrassed by the latter's plea that the prisoners of the French be well treated - very few had been taken because those men-at-arms who had not been able to flee were for the most part bludgeoned to death, although with some difficulty owing to their protective armour, by swarms of valets⁵⁸. Reporting on the battle of Agnadello, the Florentine ambassador to Milan noted that few Venetian men-at-arms were taken prisoner by the French, for most of those unable to escape were cut to pieces⁵⁹. We may ascribe such behaviour variously to the viciousness of plebeian troops or to the natural impetuosity of the French in battle, but an element of deliberate brutality

58. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. 11, pp. 538 and 532.

59. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations, vol. 11, p. 330.

was also involved - of which the French were a little proud, in as much as it proved their virility⁶⁰ - and in this context it was not unknown for enemy prisoners to be executed, in order to discourage resistance: in 1509 Louis XII himself had the Venetian captain of Peschiera hanged from the battlements of the place, after its capture, despite the protests of his lieutenants and the prospect of ransom⁶¹. The Venetians appear to have been remarkably tolerant of this kind of savage treatment.

The expectation of ransom gain on the captor's part was usually enough to guarantee a captive's safety, if the latter were of sufficient quality. On the other hand, the possession of a high marketable value also had its drawbacks. In April 1509, Jean de Fontrailles, his company, a body of infantry and other miscellaneous troops were installed in Treviglio, a recently-captured Venetian town in Lombardy. Soon afterwards, Treviglio was cut off by a counter-offensive of the main Venetian field army and,

60. For example, an anonymous historian, commenting that the French showed no mercy at Fornovo, notes that for Italians this was a new style of waging war, betraying the customary scorn for Italian effeminacy in battle, B.N., fr. 17519, fol. 176.

61. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, p. 356; Fleuranges, op.cit., p. 177. Bridge claims that the captain's two sons were hanged as well, A history of France, iv, p. 37.

after some resistance, the garrison opened negotiations with the enemy. The French captains offered the town to their assailants on the basis of guaranteed freedom for themselves, though with the fate of the remainder of the garrison at the discretion of the Venetians. The latter, however, insisted that the whole garrison surrender itself, since they wished to exchange the French captains for some Venetian prisoners in Milan. On the 8th of May, Fontrailles and his companions were obliged to accept the enemy's terms. The Venetians selected four dozen or so men of worth to retain, and sent the rest on their way, after relieving them of their arms, horses and belongings, and extracting from them an oath to desist from fighting against the Republic for one year⁶². The prisoners were first conducted to Brescia, where it appears a fair number were released, for only twenty-four seem to have been transported to Venice itself. In the evening of the 15th of May two barks arrived from Padua to deliver seven of the captives at the Doge's Palace - those of highest quality "... with their gowns of crimson velvet, edged with gold." Late that night they were put into the State prison of Torricella at the Palace. On the 22nd, seventeen more French captives arrived, but by now the Signory was running out of prison space, and four of the newcomers were promptly released and the rest installed in some low

62. Diarii, vol. viii, cols. 205-6, 209-10, 215 and 236. Sanuto notes that some people in Venice were sorry that the Gascon footsoldiers were allowed to escape with their lives, ibid., col. 206.

dungeons⁶³.

After the battle of Agnadello and the capture of Bartolomeo Alviano by the French, the Venetians were anxious to use Fontrailles and his comrades in an exchange for their lost captain. Louis XII would not consent to this, even though the Signory offered all their Treviglio captives for just this one man⁶⁴. Whilst the wrangle continued, Fontrailles and the others languished in the Torricella. Here they became the obvious scapegoats for any Venetian hostility to the French - in mid-July, the Signory heard that Venetian captives in Milan were being badly treated, so that the Doge ordered that conditions in the Torricella be worsened⁶⁵. The prisoners remained in captivity throughout 1509, until the Republic finally agreed to Louis XII's terms for an exchange, which took place at Lignago in January 1510. This was none too soon for Fontrailles and friends, who evidently complained about

63. Ibid., cols. 210, 254 and 300.

64. Ibid., viii, cols. 346, 391 and 418, and ix, col. 54.

65. Ibid., ix, col. 518. The Torricella consisted of a set of appartments in the upper part of the Palace - a fairly comfortable prison, W. Carew Hazlitt, The Venetian Republic, 2 vols. (London, 1915), ii, p. 595.

their treatment to their compatriots.⁶⁶

The status and reputation of Fontrailles, which had made the Venetians so loathe to part with him for anything but the highest return, served Roger de Béarn well some years later. After months of defiance, Béarn surrendered Trezzo-on-Adda to the Spaniards on the 3rd of January 1513. However, he managed to negotiate his own immunity from arrest, along with that of perhaps part of his garrison, with the Marquis of Padula. The rest of his men were deprived of their arms, horses and other goods by the victors.⁶⁷ Brantôme notes that Padula treated Roger well, as he knew his reputation and respected him, a Gascon, as a neighbour⁶⁸. By the 9th, Béarn was

66. Diarii, ix, cols. 422, 436 and 506, and x, cols. 223 and 525. The nature of the complaints by the former captives is not clear; we have seen how in July it was ordered that conditions of imprisonment be made less congenial, the French having been "excellently treated" to date, ibid., viii, col. 518. Even if such an order were not enforced, conditions in the Torricella may still have become unpleasant, because of overcrowding, as it was reported in July that the prisons in the Palace were full, ibid., col. 537. Perhaps French complaints stemmed more from the length of their captivity, for it seems that at the surrender of Treviglio it had been arranged to exchange Fontrailles and company for Venetian prisoners already in French hands, ibid., col. 481. The capture of Alviano obviously changed the picture, and despite repeated moves by the Republic's executive to arrange an exchange on the agreed terms, such propositions were continually outvoted in the College.

67. Ibid., vol. xv, cols. 460-1. According to another report, all but Roger were plundered, ibid., col. 484.

68. Brantôme, Oeuvres, vol. iii, p. 171.

riding for France, after having been escorted to Milan by Spanish troops, no doubt as a protection against the fury of the Swiss who threatened to massacre the French from Trezzo.⁶⁹

Although Roger de Béarn may well have owed his freedom in part to the kind regard of his adversary, the strength of his fortress surely also stood him in good stead when it came to treating for the surrender of Trezzo⁷⁰. A similar advantage did much to allow Duras at Crema to escape the fate of Fontrailles. Duras even managed to protect his troops from being robbed, but he needed great persistence to ensure that his terms were met. On the 9th of September 1512, he agreed to yield Crema to the Venetians, on condition of freedom for the garrison and security of its property⁷¹. The threat of the proximity of a Swiss force had led Duras to come to terms, for the French "would sooner have been Turkish slaves than to have fallen into Swiss hands⁷²." Duras, however, determined

69. Diarii, xv, col. 484.

70. Ibid., col. 191. Venetian reports differ somewhat in their understanding of the motives leading to Trezzo's surrender: pressure from local inhabitants, kinship with the enemy, and simply a severe artillery bombardment are variously invoked to explain the surrender of a fortress which was obviously held to pose a stern test to any besieging force, ibid., cols. 467 and 484.

71. Ibid., col. 56.

72. Ibid., cols. 60, 73 and 74-5.

to hold on to the castle of Crema, with his son a hostage for its eventual surrender, pending receipt of safeconducts from Venice, the Pope, and Cardinal Schinner, leader of the Swiss. With such guarantees, he hoped to be able to retreat with all his men, and all their horses, arms and goods, to Genoa or Pisa, and embark for France⁷³. The Republic's safeconduct was quickly delivered⁷⁴, but since it was Milanese territory through which Duras aimed to retire to France, this concession was of little help. The Pope and Schinner would not issue their guarantees, the former apparently being swayed by the Spanish envoy in Rome, who thought it a mistake to allow French troops to depart with full equipment. As a result, the Signory tried to persuade Duras to retreat eastwards through Venetian territory⁷⁵, but he would not be moved until he had his safeconducts, especially as he still feared that the Swiss might block his retreat, even through Venetian lands⁷⁶. Duras' obstinacy was finally rewarded, however; Rome relented, the Pope signing a safeconduct on the 22nd of September, although Schinner's was not accorded until 20th of

73. Ibid., cols 52, 107, 109-10; F. Sforza Benvenuti, Storia di Crema, 2 vols. (Milan, 1859-60), vol. i, p. 332.

74. Diarii, xv, col. 42.

75. Ibid., cols. 99 and 113.

76. Ibid., col. 110.

October⁷⁷. The Papal safeconduct was the crucial document - the Swiss being in Lombardy as Rome's allies - and soon after its issue Duras yielded Crema castle⁷⁸. A Papal envoy was detailed to accompany the French to Genoa, but further complications seem to have arisen over a Genoese safeconduct⁷⁹, and it appears that Duras only left Crema on the 22nd of October and then travelled overland to France⁸⁰. At all events, the French garrison of Crema escaped from enemy territory with all their goods⁸¹.

Duras and his company were able to escape relatively unscathed, partly because the Venetians feared that the Swiss might sieze Crema from under their noses if matters were not quickly settled, and partly because Crema castle was virtually unassailable⁸². Neither dissension amongst his enemies nor the strength of his fortress were able to save Menaut d'Aguerre, Charles VIII's castellan at Ostia. Menaut had been put into the place

77. Ibid., cols. 143 and 256-7.

78. Ibid., cols. 124 and 134.

79. Ibid., cols. 192-3.

80. Ibid., cols. 293, 307 and 337-8.

81. Ibid., col. 346.

82. Ibid., col. 83.

as early as December 1494, and thereafter preyed on shipping in the Tiber. Papal forces were apparently unable to reduce Ostia without Spanish help, and on the 19th of February 1497 Gonzalo de Córdoba entered Rome with a small force⁸³. The prospects of success seemed feeble, for, as Venetian sources reported, the Spanish troops were very poorly accounted whilst Ostia's garrison was in fine spirit and amply provisioned⁸⁴. Nevertheless, what Papal excommunication and blockade had failed to achieve was quickly delivered by Spanish assault - on the 9th of March, Menaut surrendered⁸⁵. Although the lives of the defenders were spared, Menaut was some days later paraded through the streets of Rome, mounted on a "scrawny nag" as the centrepiece of Gonzalo's triumph. When the procession reached St. Peter's, where Alexander VI and his Cardinals were assembled, the fate of Aguerre was decided - whilst he humbly knelt at the Pontiff's feet, Córdoba managed to secure his victim's freedom from a reluctant Alexander⁸⁶.

83. Ibid., vol. 1, col. 539.

84. loc.cit..

85. L. M. de Lojendio, Gonzalo de Córdoba, el Gran Capitán (Madrid, 1942), pp. 129-30.

86. Ibid., pp. 130-1; Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marchese di Pescara, pp. 48-9. A more recent biographer of Gonzalo claims that Menaut was chained to his captor's page, and that when confronted with the Pope he miserably asked for pardon "... in repetitive phrase, to which the Pope for some time deigned no reply", G. de Gaury, The Grand Captain (London, 1955), pp. 49-50.

All sources agree that Menaut d'Aguerre owed his salvation to Gonzalo de Córdoba. Perhaps the Spanish commander felt that the Basque had suffered sufficiently through humiliation in the streets of Rome, perhaps Gonzalo wished to recruit his ferocious adversary to his side⁸⁷. Such speculation is prompted by the knowledge that the Spaniards acquired a certain notoriety amongst the French for the ill-treatment of prisoners. Jean d'Auton's description of the second Neapolitan campaign is sprinkled with references to the Spanish flouting of the "conventions of war, which, according to military statutes, should be strictly observed...⁸⁸." Hostages given for the safe-conduct of the defenders of Canosa in 1502 were threatened with the galleys or a prison if they refused to change sides, and French garrisons which surrendered Castellaneta and Ruvo the next year were refused ransoms, and some of their members manacled and incarcerated in lethal, low dungeons⁸⁹. Later on, the troops who yielded Gioja in Calabria, after the defeat at Seminara, were either imprisoned or dispatched to the galleys, a fate which also awaited Aubigny's men at Rocca d'Angito and those who survived the capture of

87. Diarii, i, cols. 555-6.

88. Auton, vol. ii, p. 294.

89. Ibid., ii, pp. 293-4, and iii, pp. 137, 146 and 148.

Castel dell'Uovo in Naples, in June 1503⁹⁰. Whatever the extent of exaggeration involved in these accusations, it remains undeniable that, as Auton asserted, Gonzalo de Córdoba was often loath to permit his captives to be ransomed⁹¹, despite the contrary claim of a Spanish chronicler that he was scrupulously correct in the matter⁹². Gonzalo's chivalrous tastes were made to take second place to his appreciation of the need to deprive his enemy of as much manpower as possible. The result was months of imprisonment for those who fell into Spanish hands, fourteen in the case of the company of Aymar de Prie, taken at Castellaneta in February 1503 - during this time these troops had no change of clothing, so that upon release from prison in Taranto the first task of their lieutenant, Louis de St. Bonnet, was to purchase new shirts and shoes, with money donated by Louis d'Ars⁹³, who was still holding out in the south in the spring of 1504. The majority of French captives taken during the long campaign in Naples were promptly released by the terms of the surrender of Gaeta in January 1504, however, although almost all of them were naked and penniless⁹⁴. No doubt, Gonzalo de Córdoba

90. Ibid., iii, pp. 166, 179-81 and 184-5.

91. Ibid., p. 110.

92. Lojendio, op.cit., p. 195.

93. Auton, iii, pp. 324-5.

94. Ibid., p. 305.

had been only too happy to free Menaut d'Aguerre in 1497, since the latter's release could have had no bearing on the future course of a campaign already as good as won.

Consignment to an enemy galley was an especially cruel sentence, as the fate normally reserved for criminals and infidels⁹⁵. Captives of the Venetians had little to fear in this direction, since the Republic of St. Mark maintained free galley crews, but for the Spaniards and Neapolitans, the temptation to provide French prisoners to their galleys seems to have been considerable, although whether this was done to gratify hatred or simply in response to the needs of the fleet is not clear. It appears that some or most of those condemned to the galleys in the south in 1503 were released the following year⁹⁶. Besides, it was recognised by the enemy that on the whole

95. It is interesting that the Bâtard de Luxe, a man-at-arms of Aguerre's company, had a page or valet whom he had redeemed from the galleys - in other words the page was a former convict, Pélissier, "Note e documenti su Luigi XII e Ludovico Sforza," in A.S.I., ser. 5, vol. xxiii, p. 154.

96. At least Auton notes that Malherbe, a companion of Aubigny's in Calabria, who was sent to the galleys with the others who yielded Rocca d'Angito, was released in 1504, and besides, Louis XII's historiographer makes clear that he interviewed a number of those who shared Malherbe's fate, Auton, iii, pp. 179-80 and 305. Some of those who were consigned to the galleys after the surrender of Castel dell'Uovo managed to escape by killing their sleeping guards, ibid., p. 185.

a sentence in the galleys was no fit penalty for a gentleman; at least the more notable French captives of 1503, like La Palice and Aubigny, escaped this fate. Guillaume de Villeneuve describes how, when he was imprisoned in Castel Nuovo in Naples in 1496, thirty or forty French soldiers, including three gentlemen, were brought to the place as captives - whilst the gentlemen were locked up, the others were consigned to the Neapolitan galleys⁹⁷. In Villeneuve's own case, a galley had served as a dungeon, following his capture at Trani in August 1495. He had been joined in October by Gabriel d'Albret, seigneur de Lesparre, who had at first been incarcerated in an island fortress in Brindisi harbour, and who had given the miserable Villeneuve half his borrowed purse of ten ducats. Both men were transported round the Calabrian coast and put into Castel Nuovo, after its capture⁹⁸. To judge from Villeneuve's account, Lesparre's treatment compared favourably with his own, and he was obviously recognised as a nobleman of the highest rank. He did not long outlive his release in January 1496, however⁹⁹.

97. Villeneuve, Mémoires, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 315.

98. Ibid., pp. 274-5, 286-7 and 304.

99. Lesparre died on his way home from Naples, at Lyons, on the 18th of July, 1496, B.N., dossiers bleus 9, p. 58.

In terms of casualties of war, as in terms of its profits, the south of Italy proved to be a more hazardous field of operations than the north. Not only was French enterprise in Naples less successful than in Lombardy, but it was more difficult for the garrison to escape the potential consequences of defeat - the country was isolated, communications with France, and even Lombardy, immensely long, possible relief months away: after all, it took Charles VIII almost two months to travel from Naples to Asti in 1495, moving at top speed. If a posting to Naples was hardly the equivalent of a sentence of death, it was at least the nearest thing to it in the contemporary soldier's military career. Service here took a continuous toll of the French garrison: in November 1502, for example, the Venetian governor of Trani presented a list of this garrison, with the theoretical complement of all units of horse and foot involved; at the end he noted, however, that about one-fifth of those in his list were either dead, ill or had departed¹⁰⁰. At this stage, the battle of Cerignola was over five months away, and the difficult part of Nemours' campaign had not yet begun. In the north, geographical conditions permitted more flexibility - communications within Lombardy and with the homeland were excellent, and troops and supplies could be transported by means of an

100. Diarii, vol. iv, cols. 526-9.

extensive system of waterways; orders and information travelled swiftly whilst strategic retreats and counter-offensives were practicable. If such geographical circumstances meant that the Milanese was particularly vulnerable to attack, owing to its want of readily defensible frontiers, they did at least facilitate the evacuation of armies westwards - the route to safety was straight and rarely impeded.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOYALTY AND DISCIPLINE IN THE ARMY IN ITALY

The French army of 1494 impressed Italians on many counts, but above all perhaps on account of its amenability to royal control, from which advantage most of its other qualities appeared to flow. Charles VIII's prospective expedition was, as we have seen, highly unpopular with the standing army. As the Florentine ambassador noted in June 1494, "... many of (the gendarmes) would have sooner been paid off then to have gone (on the expedition);" however, "... to satisfy the King, and in obedience to him, each man consented and let himself be led on¹." The Florentine explained the contradiction in the following terms: "the gendarmes can and are obliged to go wherever the King commands, without any increment in salary, since they are paid their wages continuously and regularly²." In 1499 a Venetian envoy expressed this same view rather more lyrically, suggesting that "these troops, even if ordered to India, would only have received their regular pay and would have been obliged to go³." The obligation to serve anywhere,

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1. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, vol. i, pp. 311 and 292 respectively.
 2. Ibid., pp. 305-6.
 3. Diarii, vol. ii, col. 764.

and at any time, at the bidding of the King was not determined exclusively by regular receipt of the King's pay, however. As an informant of the Venetian annalist, Malipiero, remarked, on the French cavalry returning north through Rome in 1495, "they were fine troops, spirited and devoted to their lord⁴." In other words the French soldier was bound to his King not only by his salary but by loyalty as well.

Here in effect we have the enunciation, and the attribution to the gendarmerie of Charles VIII and Louis XII, of those two principal distinguishing characteristics of a modern, national army, which set it apart from the medieval host and the mercenary band alike - namely its permanent upkeep, in peacetime as well as wartime, and its possession of a common, sovereign loyalty. The foundations and implications of this overriding bond between gendarme and King were explored by Guicciardini in a eulogy of the *compagnies d'ordonnance*, which, if a little over-optimistic in parts, does reveal something of the envy with which those who had to rely on mercenary troops viewed the resources of the Kings of France. The French army was "... formidable,... not because of its numbers but because of the valour of its soldiers. Since the gendarmes were almost all the King's subjects, and not common types but gentlemen, whom the captains could not enlist or dismiss simply at their will, and who were paid not by their officers but by the royal ministers, the companies not only retained a full complement but the men, their horses

4. Malipiero, Annali veneti, in A.S.I., vol. vii, pt.I, p.345.

and arms were in excellent trim, for they were rich enough to provide for themselves in this regard. All this made the soldier try to serve better, in search of honour, which was nourished in the heart of the troops as they were born noblemen, as well as because through courageous deeds they could hope for reward, both outside and inside the army, so that one might ascend to a captaincy. The captains had similar incentives, were almost all barons or lords (or at least of very noble blood), nearly all subjects of the King and had no other intention but to merit praises from him, since the size of their company was restricted, because according to French custom no-one was granted more than one hundred lances⁵."

For Guicciardini therefore the gendarmerie demonstrated all those admirable qualities for which Italians looked in vain within their own armed forces. Reliance upon mercenary arms was for Machiavelli too the chief cause of the ruin of Italy in his time:

"...mercenaries are disunited, thirsty for power, undisciplined and disloyal; ... brave among their friends and cowards before the enemy; ... in peacetime you are despoiled by them, and in wartime by the enemy. The reason for all this is that there is no loyalty or inducement to keep them in the field apart from the little they are paid..."

In short,

"mercenary armies bring only slow, belated and feeble conquests, but sudden, startling defeat ... And the result of their prowess has been that Italy has been overrun by

5. F. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, publ. by C. Panigada (Bari, 1929), vol. i, pp. 72-3.

Charles, plundered by Louis, assaulted by Ferdinand, and outraged by the Swiss."⁶

In some contrast to all this stood the regular army of the King of France, for "... if his infantry had been as good as his gendarmes, he would have been able to make head against all the princes in Europe⁷." Clearly, contemporaries saw the French standing army as fundamentally different from the type of force which had dominated warfare in Italy in the decades before Charles' invasion, and they measured its superiority in terms of loyalty rather than equipment, tactical skill or the quality of its command. Although the traditional classification of the Italian condottieri as little more than players at war has recently come in for some critical examination⁸, it would be idle to deny that the French army established a distinct moral superiority over Italian arms during our period. To what extent, however, was this simply a natural advantage enjoyed by the forces of a united monarchy opposed to the armies of small states, which could only face the French on equal terms with the help of unreliable allies? If the loyalty of the *compagnies d'ordonnance* to the King of France was impressive, their discipline was less so. Machiavelli wrote on another occasion that the French men-at-arms were "... as

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6. N. Machiavelli, The Prince, trans. G. Bull (Penguin edition, 1961), pp. 77 and 81-2.
 7. Machiavelli, "Sketch of the constitution and affairs of France", in Works, trans. Farnsworth, vol. ii, p. 496.
 8. Notably by Pieri, in Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana, and Mallett, in Mercenaries and their masters.

insolent and dangerous as (those of Italy)...⁹." The French Kings of the fifteenth century had attempted to create an army of undivided allegiance and single purpose. What does the performance of this army in its first major test abroad tell us of its development as a cohesive, disciplined force?

"Inside every army is a crowd struggling to get out...", a modern, military historian has remarked; he goes on to explain that "... a crowd is the antithesis of an army, a human assembly animated not by discipline but by mood..."¹⁰. Throughout the Italian Wars the French army was liable to succumb to its crowd-like instincts under pressure. In writing about the retreat from Naples in 1495 Commynes noted that the fighting spirit of the troops gradually waned: "this is what people say about the nature of us Frenchmen, and the Italians have written it in their histories, that on their arrival the French are more than men, but on their retreat they are less than women."¹¹ Commynes did not believe, however, that this was a peculiarly French characteristic. It was natural that morale should suffer in adversity. In fact, as Commynes makes plain, the discipline of the retreating army of 1495 remained firm and a participant wrote from Asti at the end of the ordeal that

9. Machiavelli, The art of war, trans. E. Farnsworth, revised edition (Indianapolis, 1965), p. 22.

10. J. Keegan, The face of battle (Penguin edition, 1978), p. 175.

11. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. ii, p. 541.

he "pitied the poor gendarmes who had served so well."¹² Nevertheless, circumstances combined to hold Charles' army together during its flight northwards from Naples - the need for solidarity in the face of superior numbers, the prospect of relief at the end of the road, the very presence of the King in the ranks. No such incentives were allowed those who were marooned in Naples. In 1495 about one hundred gendarmes who had been ordered to remain in the south left their posts for home¹³. Jean d'Auton regarded the Garigliano disaster as a national disgrace, caused by want of spirit. Louis d'Ars, who continued a guerilla campaign in Apulia into 1504, was compared favourably by the chronicler with those who had shirked their duty at the Garigliano¹⁴.

Failures of morale in Naples should perhaps occasion less surprise than the redoubtable, but ultimately doomed, stands of men like Ars and Gratien d'Aguerre. French operations in the south were usually so badly supported from home and payment of the Neapolitan garrison so irregular that one is prompted to conclude that on occasion the Crown received the loyalty it deserved. Nonetheless it is clear that as the wars in Italy continued the morale of the French army declined - fatigue replaced

12. La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, p. 359.

13. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société à la fin du moyen âge, p. 455.

14. Auton, vol. iii, p. 322. Louis' historiographer did however absolve the rank and file of responsibility for the Garigliano fiasco - the leaders were to blame, ibid., p. 295.

confidence, defeat in the field was increasingly accompanied by panic, the all too rare successes greeted with relief rather than exultation. Machiavelli saw the cause of this demoralisation in French dependence on Swiss footsoldiers, for "... the mounted troops... had come to believe that without them they could not win a battle¹⁵." Certainly it is tempting to date French decline in morale from the time that Swiss armies began to intervene in Lombardy on their own account - in other words from 1510 onwards. The Venetians heard that during the Swiss invasion of the Milanese in December 1511 many Frenchmen fled towards Novara, "fearing that they would be cut to pieces" by the invaders¹⁶. The ejection of the French from Lombardy in the summer of 1512 was remarkably rapid, the precipitate flight of La Palice's army suggesting panic; indeed a modern authority maintains that some members of the Ordonnances quit the campaign even before the enemy had crossed the Adda¹⁷. The battle of Novara in the following year did nothing to bolster French courage in the face of the Swiss, and when subsequently Burgundy was invaded the humiliation of the army was complete.

15. Machiavelli, The Prince, p.86.

16. Diarii, vol. xiii, col. 367.

17. C. Kohler, Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie (1506-12) (Geneva, 1896), p. 373.

Dijon, besieged by the Swiss in September, was commanded by La Trémoille, who lamented, according to his biographer, that "... the fortitude of the French was so corrupted and their hearts so enfeebled by fear and pusillanimity, by God's wish...¹⁸." The hard-won victory over a smallish Swiss army at Marignano only partially restored French confidence - after the engagement many of the victors went home and many more would have liked to do so, fearing another Swiss attack¹⁹. Indeed, by the reign of Francis I the French had acquired such a reputation for faint-heartedness that Venetian envoys to Milan could dismiss their courage with scorn²⁰, in a way which would have been unthinkable in earlier years.²¹

This deterioration of morale reflects a growing dis-

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18. Bouchet, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 476.
 19. Spont, "Marignan et l'organisation militaire sous François Ier.," in Revue des Questions Historiques, vol. lxvi, pp. 71 and 74.
 20. The ambassador Trevisan noted in 1516 that "... when the French turned their backs they did not return in a hurry, and were terrified of the Swiss," Diarii, vol. xxiii, col. 165; Caroldo reported in 1520 on an action he had witnessed in Lombardy when attached to Lautrec, recalling that "... (the French) had retired to Milan, the armies full of fear and confusion, as (they) were used to display in retreat," Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. Segarizzi, vol. ii, p.5.
 21. Sanuto had noted, for example, the general opinion in the Venetian College on 7th of March 1512, as Gaston de Foix prepared for his offensive in Emilia - it had been that the prospects of the Holy League were bleak, since "... the French were brave and masters of the art of war," Diarii, vol. xiv, col. 17.

illusion with Italian adventure, as it became apparent that any French success would lead inevitably to a coalescence of hostile powers and must invariably therefore be short-lived. It also reflects the declining efficacy of the French army, confronted by both old enemies possessed of new weapons, like the Spaniards, and by fresh ones, like the Swiss. French fear of the Swiss was real enough - they were after all disciplined, ruthless in battle and merciless in victory - but it was a symptom of declining morale, not its fundamental cause. This lay in an appreciation of the general, depressing history of French intervention in Italy and of the alarming developments in warfare. In short, declining morale was both natural and logical. In the circumstances, the comparative ease with which the French Kings continued to be able to launch campaigns into Italy is remarkable. If the growing trepidation of the gendarmerie undermined discipline on the battlefield, there seems to be little evidence that it led to an increased incidence of mutiny or desertion. Outbreaks of the latter had always been rare, but when they did occur were almost invariably determined by financial stringency, and more particularly by grievances over pay. A Florentine envoy wrote from Lyons at the end of January 1504, and told how the troops recently returned from Gaeta no longer wished to remain in Italy, and how many had already left, in defiance of orders and despite the commission of a senior official to regulate affairs²². These refugees from the Garigliano were no doubt unpaid and had certainly suffered_

22. Machiavelli, Opere, vol. vii, p. 184. The envoy was not in fact Machiavelli but his colleague, Valori.

much hardship in Naples. Similarly, the army of La Palice operating in Friuli in 1511, from which many desertions were reported, was severely afflicted by a dearth of supplies, aggravated by peculation²³. In the same way, the refusal of the Duras company to obey the orders of La Trémoille to advance in 1513 - incidentally the only known instance of mutinous behaviour on the part of one of our Gascon units - was caused by faulty payment²⁴. We have seen that irregular remuneration was a constant hazard for the gendarmerie; usually the deficiency could be made up by extortions from the civil population, but when this was not possible deserters and mutineers could no doubt justify their behaviour, since the Crown had in effect broken the terms of their contract of service.

At muster company members were obliged to swear to serve the King against all comers. But it was always easier to exact oaths of allegiance and prescribe sanctions than to enforce adherence to the rules. Absenteeism of gendarmes was a perennial problem but only in war-time was it a serious offence it seems; nevertheless the prescription of death for offenders, operating at the end of Louis XI's reign, was mitigated by Charles VIII to exclusion from the Ordonnances and a fine - no doubt for reasons of practicality. Ideal justice had to be tempered by compromise and it is interesting

23. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., vol. 11, pp. 537-8.

24. B.N., fr. 2928, fol 16 vo., (copy in n.a.fr. 7648, fol. 52 vo.).

that men who departed on leave were obliged to surrender their war-horse and other equipment, so as to minimise any temptation to abscond - in other words prevention was better than cure²⁵. Strictly, absenteeism is not quite the same as desertion anyway, for the latter implies a sense of permanence. Many recorded 'desertions' were probably only temporary, for how could one escape the punitive consequences of real desertion from an élite corps of troops, whose names were inscribed in muster-rolls and whose faces were known to captain, lieutenant or ensign? At all events, whether for this reason or because of more regular payment, surer devotion to the King's cause or superior professional pride, the gendarmerie was undoubtedly less liable to desertion than other branches of the French army. On one occasion Chaumont d'Amboise wrote to the governor of Dauphiné, Gaston de Foix, complaining that the gentlemen-levies of that province had deserted him after he had paid them out of his own pocket, whilst waiting for funds from France; if they went unpunished their example would be followed by the men of the Ordonnances²⁶. The Florentine ambassador to Lombardy, on the other hand, wrote from Peschiera in 1509, noting that although a number of both horse and foot had deserted from the field-army, all members of the Ordonnances, as well as the household troops, were still serving²⁷. In short, regular troops were more reliable than the levies which the Crown was forced to use to

25. Contamine, op.cit., pp. 491 and 501-2.

26. B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 59.

27. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, p. 355.

make up numbers. Footsoldiers were notoriously inconstant. They deserted when operations foundered, as at the siege of Pisa in 1501²⁸, or when success had yielded them their reward, as at the sacks of Brescia and Ravenna in 1512²⁹. Although we should not underestimate the role of the royal supervision and control in keeping the gendarmerie in place, its greater constancy should no doubt also be ascribed to its ethos of service. If the conscript-levy went to war because he had to, and the mercenary-footsoldier in search of booty, the gendarme served because soldiering was his profession.

The gravest offence for a gendarme was to defect to the enemy. The penal code drawn up in 1506 - although never applied - prescribed torture and devouring by wild beasts or hanging for anyone convicted of such a crime. Many offences merited death in the code, such as being the first to flee in battle, selling one's equipment, abandoning one's dead captain, mutiny, suicide or wounding, but only defection, and treason, carried the penalty of torture as well³⁰.

28. Auton, vol. 1, p. 311. In this case the infantrymen were mainly Gascons.

29. Bayard's biographer thought that the sack of Brescia was the ruin of the campaign of 1512, *Le loyal serviteur, Histoire du gentil seigneur de Bayard*, ed. Roman, p. 284, whilst Fleuranges believed that the battle of Ravenna could never have been won had Ravenna itself been captured beforehand, *Histoire des choses mémorables...*, in *Collection des mémoires*, ed. Petitot, vol. xvi, pp. 213-4.

30. Contamine, *op.cit.*, pp. 521-2.

In fact evidence of desertion by gendarmes to the enemy is almost non-existent. News from Naples in 1502 suggested that some French men-at-arms had gone over to the Spaniards³¹ but the claim cannot be confirmed. Those men who are known to have served both the King of France and later his enemies were either borderers, like La Marck and Vergy, who both held lands on either side of the Franco-Imperial frontier, or foreigners, like Oger d'Aguerre, nephew of Gratien and a Navarrese, who served in the Lautrec company in 1512 and later fought for the King of Aragon in Navarre³². If there were other foreign members of the Ordonnances who changed sides - and there must have been some - they are not known to us. Certainly there is no evidence of Navarrase men-at-arms defecting to the Spaniards in Italy and it is indeed hard to envisage any general temptation to have done so, beyond the exigencies of the moment. When Gonzalo de Córdoba was besieging Taranto in 1501, for instance, the mutiny in his army over lack of pay was only made more dangerous by news of César Borgia's recruitment campaign reaching the camp³³. In fact when Gonzalo had first arrived in Calabria earlier in that year he had been joined by 800 Spaniards, hitherto in Borgia's service³⁴. It is one of the ironies of the wars in Naples that the French were defeated by an enemy possessed

31. Diarii, vol. iv, col. 541.

32. Jaurgain, "Profils basques, Menaut et Gratien d'Aguerre", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, vol. iv, pp. 155-6.

33. Lojendio, Gonzalo de Córdoba, pp. 171-2.

34. Ibid., p. 168.

of a less well-developed military system, particularly in terms of finance. There are a number of references in literary sources to offers made to French captains by foreign powers to enter their service, but always without success - Gonzalo tried to recruit two French hostages in 1502, whilst the Pope bid for the services of Louis d'Ars in 1504, for example³⁵ - and on the whole, as far as named captains are concerned, the impression is rather one of movement in the other direction, into French service: a certain Capitaine des Pietres (who seems to have later joined the Foix company) left the ranks of the Burgundian contingent in Sforza's army at Novara in 1500 to join the French; the Spanish captain, Peralta, deserted Córdoba in Naples in 1502 to enter enemy service³⁶; and, most famously of all, Pedro Navarro was recruited by Francis I in 1515.

If the King of France could usually count on the loyalty of his gendarmes he could be less sure of the service of others of his subjects and his army. Although the defenders of the fortress of Monte San Giovanni (chief Neapolitan obstacle in the path of Charles VIII in 1495),

35. Auton, vol. ii, p. 293, and iii, p. 327. It seems that the Venetians considered employing Menaut d'Aguerre, who was recommended to them by Gié as "a valiant man and experienced in many campaigns," Diarii, vol. iii, cols. 422-3. This was, however, in 1500, when Venice was an ally of France. There is no evidence that Menaut left French service anyway.

36. Auton, i, p. 252 and ii, p. 295.

amongst whom were numbered Frenchmen, Normans, Picards and Gascons, were dismissed by a chronicler as "thieves, murderers, exiles and criminals without ears"³⁷, it is certain that not all French subjects who were recruited to the service of foreign princes and states were simply outlaws. On the contrary most were plain mercenaries, like the Gascons hired by Caterina Sforza in 1499 to fight Borgia³⁸ or those engaged in the defence of Treviso for the Venetians in 1511, in opposition to a Franco-Imperial army³⁹. Many such mercenaries began no doubt as soldiers of the King, such as the companions of Guillaume de Villeneuve, governor of Trani in Apulia, who were bribed into changing sides in 1495⁴⁰. Others may never have been in French service at all. By whatever means mercenary soldiers reached Italy, however, the peninsula must have at all times been populated by rootless adventurers looking for employment, but particularly after completion of

37. La Vigne, Le vergier d'honneur, in Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France, ed. Cimber and Danjou, ser. I, vol. 1, pp. 327-8.

38. E. Breisach, Caterina Sforza (Chicago, 1967), p. 215.

39. Diarii, xiii, cols. 239-40. At the same time, however, the attackers thought that the very presence of these Gascons in Treviso might be to their advantage, as they hoped to persuade them to defect.

40. Villeneuve, Mémoires, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 270.

a major campaign, when footsoldiers were paid off. One particular group of mercenaries had fewer ties than most - Albanian light-horsemen. It is clear that the services of these soldiers could be easily bought and that their employer could rely on little more than monetary incentive to retain them. This did not prevent the French from incorporating Albanians into the *compagnies d'ordonnance* as archers, but they remained of no firm allegiance⁴¹.

By the standards of the time, therefore, the loyalty of the gendarmerie to the King's cause was solid enough. But the desire that gendarmes should obey royal orders, and particularly that they should keep the King's peace, was less readily realised. Violence was the gendarme's trade and it would have been hopeful in the extreme to have expected him to confine his blows exclusively to the enemy. Although most of the registers of the Trésor des Chartes for our period have disappeared, details of royal pardons for members of Gascon companies, issued only during the few years up to 1501, give us some idea of the propensities

41. In late 1502, for instance, the Venetian governor of Monopoli wrote that some captains of stradiots had said that although they were presently in French service their true loyalty was to Venice, *Diarii*, iv, col. 477. On the other hand, the Spanish chronicler, Torres, noted how thirty-two Albanians deserted to the camp of the League prior to the battle of Ravenna, as they were starving, P. de Torres, *Sucesos de las armas de España en Italia (1511-12), con la jornada de Ravenna* (extracted from *Collecion de documentos inéditos para la historia de Espana*, vol lxxix), p. 268. We do not know whether these men were members of the *Ordonnances*, however.

of these men. In 1489 a number of men-at-arms of the Foix company were pardoned for a murder in Picardy, and in the same year one Savary de Sus, again of the Foix company, received a similar favour. In 1491 Tristan de Haux, of the Aguerre company, was pardoned for killing his archer⁴². Yet the very grant of these pardons shows that the King did not regard the above as serious crimes. Domestic and local quarrels impaired discipline but were not flagrant breaches of royal command. It is unlikely that many gendarmes would have been persistent offenders, on a level with some captains of foot. At least there seems to be no evidence of the King writing about a gendarme in the way that Louis XII described the Cadet de Bon Repos, who, together with the captains Molart and Maugiron, was suspected of some crime in Italy, for "he was said to have been five or six times condemned to hang by the Parlement of Toulouse⁴³."

This is not to say that the gendarmerie was especially disciplined or compliant however. The Florentine envoy to France remarked in 1494 that "...it was the most difficult thing to control these French gendarmes, who without compunction sallied through and lived off the countryside⁴⁴." In Italy official policy seems to have been to lodge troops in largish towns, rather than far-flung villages,

42. C. Samaran, La Gascogne dans les registres du Trésor des Chartes, D.I. (Paris, 1966), nos. 1649, 1648 and 1651 respectively.

43. Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, ed. Brewer and Brodie, vol. i, pt. I, p. 285.

44. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., vol. i, p. 294.

in order to ensure better supervision of their behaviour⁴⁵, but it was always difficult to keep men in place. On one occasion Louis XII wrote to the seneschal of Beaucaire, complaining about absentees:

"...we have written and made known to all the captains of our Ordonnances..., both on this side of the mountains and in our duchy of Milan, that they should return to their garrisons and make their gendarmes do the same... However, it has come to our notice that the said gendarmes are making little effort to do so, and, by their neglect of the service they owe us, a great surprise could ensue..."

The King ordered his seneschal to publish an order in his area that all gendarmes return to garrison (whether it be in France or Italy), irrespective of leave from their captain and on pain of rigorous penalty⁴⁶. This kind of dispersion made the concentration of forces in preparation for a campaign a trying ordeal; for instance, the Venetians heard in April 1509, just before Louis XII's offensive against their territories, that an order had been issued to French troops in the Lodi area (where the Duras company was stationed at the time) to return to lodgings, on pain of the gallows⁴⁷. But at least these troops, although dispersed, were already in Italy. Companies on the move between stations were normally provided with an escort to ensure a reasonably disciplined progression⁴⁸, but the system was by no means

45. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 86.

46. B.N., fr. 20615, fol. 37.

47. Diarii, vol. viii, col. 120.

48. In 1498, for example, the Albret company marched through Languedoc on its way to the eastern frontier, accompanied by supervisory officials, B.N., fr. 25718, no. 17.

entirely effective. Whether because of inadequate supervision, or perhaps because trans-Alpine movements presented added problems, three or four units ordered to Italy by Charles VIII in 1496 disintegrated en route in Dauphiné. Despite having been paid when in the district of Vienne, most of the members of these companies then dispersed westwards and southwards, "destroying everything". It seems, however, that some at least of these troops were newly-raised, not established members of the Ordonnances⁴⁹.

The problems of control of the army in war-time were rather different. If it was easier to supervise one's forces when concentrated than when scattered across the country in garrison, it was of course much more difficult to restore order to a large army once the fetters of control were removed than to coerce small groups of disobedient soldiers. If the fetters of control were never deliberately cut, they were at least consciously loosened at times, in order to vent the natural ferocity of the army on the enemy. For example, it was reported from Milan in 1509 that "the determination of (Louis XII) was to put to sack, flame and sword all cities, towns and castles which might await a single shot from his artillery."⁵⁰ But an army was like some huge, unwieldy vehicle which, once released from its blocks, could only with difficulty be deflected from its path - could only in fact be brought under control as its momentum died.

49. Commynes, Mémoires, ed. Dupont, vol. iii (preuves), p. 457.

50. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, p.333.

The history of the campaigns of Louis XII for the conquest of the Milanese illustrates the dangers of slackening the reins. The advance of 1499 opened with the massacre of the garrisons of two small towns, with official blessing, to put fear into the enemy. Then at Alessandria the army took its own decisions and officers were unable to prevent the sack of the place. This outrage persuaded the military authorities to impose a sterner discipline and the army marched for Pavia under strict supervision, "... the rope ready to punish offenders⁵¹." But disorder persisted after victory, for, following the fall of Milan, every day saw a French soldier hanged there for some crime, until by mid-September the city was again as calm as usual⁵². It was still necessary in October, however, for the government of Milan to give notice to all citizens to report misconduct by French troops⁵³. After a brutal campaign, during which French soldiers were encouraged to treat the Milanese without compassion, victory brought the problem of how to protect the King's newly-acquired property and subjects from a rapacious, conquering army. The contradiction was more pronounced in the following year, when the French were first expelled from Milan and then retook it definitively. The counter-offensive was characterised by a sense of retribution, since the Lombards had rebelled against their lord. After their final victory and capture of Ludovic Sforza at Novara, Louis' captains found that they

51. Auton, vol. i, p. 83.

52. Pélissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol. ii, pp. 223 and 228.

53. Pélissier, Documents pour la domination française dans le Milanais, p. 10.

had reduced Lombardy to chaos. "The Cardinal (d'Amboise) ... is extremely angry at the pillaging done by the gendarmes on this side of the Ticino," wrote Trivulzio from Milan in April, "... for... there is not a town or village in the area which has not been plundered and put to ransom." Amboise wanted La Trémouille (to whom Trivulzio was writing) to gather his lieutenants together to find out where their men were⁵⁴. Over the following weeks a number of orders were issued in an attempt to re-establish control - troops were to return to their units, stay in their cantonments and pay for their victuals; redundant soldiers were to leave the duchy, no lodging was permitted in unassigned billets and the locals were not to be insulted⁵⁵. The scene of worst disorder was the road between Milan and Vercelli. La Trémouille ordered it closed at the frontier with Piedmont so that captives could be reclaimed, but his chief military-policeman, Peytavy, reported that without written authority the gendarmes paid no heed to him, nor to his colleagues; he had managed to reclaim some distinguished Milanese prisoners from their hands however⁵⁶. Authority, once lost, could only be slowly reasserted over a rampaging crowd of an army.

54. Auton, i, pièces annexes, p. 380. Prato concluded that "... in brief, the whole Milanese was plundered," Storia di Milano, in A.S.I., ser. I, vol. iii, p. 239.

55. Péliissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol. ii, pp. 197-8.

56. R. de Maulde-la-Clavière, La conquête du canton du Tessin par les Suisses (1500-03) (Turin, 1890), pp. 14-15.

Examples of mass-behaviour tell us something of the extent to which the King of France might rely upon his army to serve his interests. However, they tell little, and then only obliquely, about personal motives, values or allegiance - little, for example, about concepts of honour and duty. For these we must turn to individuals, but recorded actions tend to be those of men of a certain standing and by no means therefore necessarily typical of the bulk of gendarmes, let alone of members of the army as a whole. When Louis d'Ars returned north from Naples in 1504 he was acclaimed as a national hero, "the most triumphant Gaul of the times"⁵⁷, who had scorned surrender to pursue the war against the Spaniards; on the other hand, "his men had only asked for booty and they had received it in equal shares," according to Jean d'Auton⁵⁸. Nonetheless, the behaviour of French captains no doubt served as a model for their dependants and followers, and it is interesting to look at the performance of some of them in circumstances which were likely to test their moral qualities.

Menaut d'Aguerre was put into Ostia by Charles VIII in 1494⁵⁹ and held the fortress there, a modern and powerful one⁶⁰, until 1497. Ostia occupied an important position -

57. Auton, iii, p. 325. Ars had fought entirely at his own expense.

58. Ibid., p. 189.

59. Ostia belonged to the Cardinal of St. Peter-in-chains (afterwards Julius II), a partisan of Charles VIII; by the terms of the agreement which the latter negotiated with Alexander VI the place was to be handed back to the Cardinal upon completion of the Neapolitan expedition, Commynes, Mémoires, ed. Dupont, iii, p. 382.

60. Mallett, Mercenaries and their masters, p. 240.

for the French as an essential staging-post on the sea-route to Naples, for the Pope as the main point of entry for Rome's imports⁶¹. Menaut continually ravaged the Roman food-supply until the city was oppressed by dearth, especially of wine, since few ships dared enter the Tiber and those that did were apprehended, looted and sunk. The obsession of Alexander VI with the thorn of Ostia is revealed in his correspondence⁶². In August 1495 the King wrote to Menaut ordering him to relent, but this instruction seems to have had little effect since the Pope complained only two months later to the Catholic Kings of the continued interruption of imports⁶³. Early in 1496 the Duke of Milan was assured by Charles VIII that Menaut had been commanded to release certain Milanese merchants he had detained⁶⁴. After his surrender to the Spaniards, Menaut protested that he had simply been faithfully serving his master, the King of France. But to Paolo Giovio the captain of Ostia was nothing but a "terrible pirate" and "horrible monster"⁶⁵. It seems clear that Menaut d'Aguerre

61. L. Suarez-Fernandez, La politica internacional de Isabel la Católica, vol. iv (Valladolid, 1971), p.386.
62. Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marchese di Pescara, trans. Domenichi, publ. Panigada, p. 47, and Lojendio, Gonzalo de Córdoba, pp. 127-8; Alexander's concern can be gauged from his letters published by Suarez-Fernandez, in op.cit., vol. iv.
63. Lettres de Charles VIII, ed. Pélicier and Mandrot, vol. iv, p. 269; Suarez-Fernandez, op.cit., p. 458.
64. Lettres de Charles VIII, vol. v, p.4.
65. Giovio, loc.cit..

overreached his brief and he may have embarrassed Charles VIII somewhat. On the other hand he was far from being a mere pirate. He acted as a vital link between the King and his garrison in Naples, lent money to an eminent French refugee to enable him to return to Grenoble⁶⁶ and was recognised by Charles as a loyal servant⁶⁷. He might well have abandoned Ostia as the French position in the south deteriorated, but instead held on till the last in hostile territory, defying both excommunication and calls to yield. Indeed his captor, Gonzalo de Córdoba, appears to have appreciated his valour as it was reported that he wished to take Menaut back to Spain⁶⁸.

One of those members of the Neapolitan garrison for whom Menaut d'Aguerre provided a link with the north was his younger brother, Gratien⁶⁹. When Gaeta surrendered in November 1496 and the French thus lost their last remaining port on the Tyrrhenian coast of the Kingdom of Naples, Gratien d'Aguerre rejected the offer of evacuation which was accepted by his French comrades and moved inland to Rocca-Guglielma, on the Garigliano. This was one of those places on the frontiers

66. Comynnes, Mémoires, ed. Dupont, vol. iii, p. 467.

67. Charles told the Pope in August 1495 that "he had always known (Menaut) for a worthy man", Lettres, iv, p. 265. As a member of the League of Venice, Alexander VI was in effect an enemy of France from April 1495 but Charles VIII seems to have been loathe to treat him as such. Menaut d'Aguerre was evidently more of a realist.

68. Diarii, vol. i, col. 556. In fact Menaut returned to France.

69. In July 1496, for instance, the Cardinal of St. Malo told the King of the receipt of letters from Menaut, with news of both Ostia and of Gratien in the Abruzzi, B.N., Dupuy 262, fol.4.

of Naples and the Papal States which was held by Giovanni della Rovere, Prefect of Rome and a French partisan, with whom Gratien had established close ties in the Abruzzi earlier in the campaign. In December the King of Naples confronted Guglielma but Aguerre was "not... accepting terms", for his fortress was strong and set in barren country⁷⁰. It is not clear whether Gratien finally yielded in the face of Spanish battery or simply because of the truce between France and the members of the League of Venice which came into force towards the end of April 1497. At all events Gratien proved to be an exceptionally stubborn defender of Charles VIII's last toe-hold in the Regno and was, as we have seen, to be rewarded for his efforts upon his return to France.⁷¹ With hindsight Gratien d'Aguerre's obstinacy appears rather futile, but prospects probably looked somewhat less hopeless at the time: the Angevins held a number of strong positions in Gaeta's hinterland even as late as the fall of that port, and Ostia was within easy reach. In February 1497 Gratien was still able to recapture Rocca d'Evandro, one of these places which had fallen to the enemy⁷². Besides, there was

70. Boislisle, *Notice sur Etienne de Vesc*, pp. 168-9 and 175-6; *Giovio, op.cit.*, p. 49; *Diarii*, vol. 1, cols. 423, 451 and 466.

71. As late as September 1497 the King could still write that Gratien was in Naples, in charge of some troops, B.N., p.o. 13 (dossier Aguerre), no.16. The reason for such a long delay in his returning northwards is not clear, but he eventually did reach France sometime in the winter of 1497-8.

72. *Diarii*, i, col. 527.

always hope that the balance of forces might change - a new army might be sent south by Charles VIII, whilst Guicciardini notes that the defection of the powerful Prince of Salerno from the Aragonese cause led these last few French garrisons to continue resistance for longer than they otherwise would have done⁷³. Perhaps more remarkable than the efforts of Gratien d'Aguerre was the defiance of Taranto, Monte San Angelo and Venosa into 1497, places on the other side of the Regno with no hope of relief⁷⁴.

The tenure of Trezzo on the Adda, some miles east of Milan, by Roger de Béarn in 1512-13 provides some parallels with the case of Menaut d'Aguerre at Ostia. Trezzo was another strong fortress dominating a curve in the river, and Roger was its castellan when he retreated thither with a body of troops during the collapse of French rule in Lombardy in June 1512. By the end of that month the Venetians had received news that the remnants of La Palice's army were at the foot of the Alps and "they all wished to cross over⁷⁵." It was a time of disintegrating morale. From Trezzo Roger pursued a successful campaign of harassment and pillage in the Milanese. A French correspondent wrote from Turin in September 1512 that "... the Baron de Béarn, who held Trezzo, had raided almost as far as Milan and had captured a deal

73. Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, publ. Panigada, vol. 1, p. 276.

74. Taranto surrendered in January 1497 and by the end of March only those places held by Aguerre and Della Rovere remained in French hands, according to Boislisle, in op.cit., p. 175-6. However Delaborde contends that Monte San Angelo and Venosa (both under the command of Captain Domjulien) also held out until the April truce, L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie, p. 682.

75. Giovio, op.cit., p. 218; Diarii, vol. xiv, col. 438.

of loot. He had ridden towards Lugano, in which area he had made a thousand good raids on the villages and hamlets which were holding for the Holy League, and had taken and killed men and burned houses - in effect he was stirring the enemy up wherever he went. It was said he had locals with him who joined in his robberies and served for scouts and spies⁷⁶."

The Swiss, who were by this time the effective rulers of Milan, intended to expunge Trezzo, incensed by such raids, but it was left to the Spaniards with their heavy artillery to bring Béarn to terms. He yielded on the 3rd of January 1513, under pressure from Trezzo's citizens, according to one report⁷⁷. His surrender left the castles of Cremona and Milan itself as the only remaining Lombard fortresses in French hands⁷⁸. It is clear that Roger de Béarn had no scruples over helping himself to the property of the King's subjects in Lombardy, but his activities hardly conflicted with royal interests. In the circumstances he had no choice in the manner of waging war, short of simply waiting for a new offensive from France. His operations can have given nothing but satisfaction to Louis XII whose Lombard subjects deserved punishment as rebels.

Another Lombard town which was held for Louis as his main army retired towards the Alps in June 1512 was Crema. The governor of this place, Jean de Durfort-Duras,

76. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 135.

77. Diarii, xv, col. 467.

78. Ibid., col. 461.

actually hurried back to Lombardy from France, it seems, upon news of the enemy's advance⁷⁹. Together with his company, Duras controlled Crema castle (a very powerful position, well-stocked with artillery and topped by the red flag with white cross of France) whilst the town was held by a few hundred Italian footsoldiers in French pay. Duras wrote to La Palice telling him of his determination to maintain Crema for the King and that "he should not doubt it...⁸⁰." A little later, with some reluctance, he agreed with his Italian colleagues that the majority of the town's population should be expelled and this was achieved, with some brutality - a wise decision, since the loyalty of most Cremans to the French cause was doubtful, victuals were scarce and the place had been overcrowded anyway⁸¹. It was later reported that Duras had boasted that he and his men "would eat the flesh of babies before yielding to the Venetians...", whilst in September, during talks with Duras' lieutenant, the Venetian commander was told that the governor "would rather eat horse-meat - and his son had already done so - than suffer shame⁸²." As is clear from such boasts the French at Crema ran low on food, but by various means Duras kept himself supplied. He even sold his own plate to pay his men⁸³. However resistance did not last long, for Venetian investment of Crema only

79. Sforza Benvenuti, Storia di Crema, vol. 1, p. 322.

80. Diarii, xv, col. 81 and xiv, cols. 319 and 389.

81. Ibid., xiv, col. 405 and Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., pp. 322-6.

82. Ibid., p. 329; Diarii, xv, cols 39-40.

83. Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., p. 328.

began in earnest in early August and the place was in their hands within a month. In the event Duras had decided to yield because he feared that his Milanese colleague, Crivelli, was ready to deliver Crema to the Swiss⁸⁴, who would have cut the French to pieces. In fact Crivelli arranged to surrender Crema to the Venetians and Duras was obliged to concur with this, having no power to continue serious resistance alone⁸⁵.

The conduct of Duras at Crema was exemplary and only appeared more admirable compared with that of Crivelli, who sold out to the enemy for personal gain. The worldly Venetians had cast a somewhat cynical light on French motives however: they had wanted to sustain a hundred cannon-shots, "for their honour", then they would come to terms, or, in the words of another correspondent, Duras yielded, "saving his honour by such means as were customary amongst soldiers."⁸⁶ The appearance of behaving in good form was evidently important, but it would be misleading to conclude from this that the 'honour' of men like Duras was specious, some kind of fraud perpetrated in the hope of reward and praise for false courage. There had to be some notional standard of good conduct against which a man might judge his own performance. Such a standard was most readily provided by the example of

84. Diarii, xv, cols. 73-4.

85. Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., pp. 332-33.

86. Diarii, cols. 36 and 75.

one's peers - thus the embattled French captain of Bergamo told his Venetian attackers in 1512 that he would surrender when he knew that Brescia had done so, whilst after the fall of Crema two members of its garrison went to Brescia to persuade it to come to terms⁸⁷. The diligence with which isolated French strongholds like Trezzo and Bergamo kept in touch with one another by gunshots and fire-signals perhaps owed something to the desire to maintain a common standard of behaviour.⁸⁸

The wish to measure up to standards of good conduct was no doubt strengthened by fear of royal punishment in the event of a lapse. Another Gascon, Guillaume de la Hitte, captain of the Castelletto of Genoa, surrendered it to the Holy League in August 1512, and a Venetian correspondent thought that "the French deserved hanging for having yielded it like cowards⁸⁹". When La Hitte reached Lyons he was arrested and imprisoned by order of the King⁹⁰. However, a sense of duty was by no means simply the product of the threat of royal displeasure. According to an envoy to Milan, writing in 1520, Lautrec, the governor, "valued neither life nor wealth, compared to honour⁹¹". Luckily such devotion to an ideal coincided with royal interests on the whole, since honour could only be proved in honourable

87. Ibid., cols 84 and 102.

88. Ibid., xiv, cols. 434 and 591, and xv, col. 54. Trezzo and Bergamo are about ten miles apart.

89. Ibid., xv, col. 43.

90. Ibid., col. 45. According to Guicciardini, La Hitte extorted 10,000 ducats from the Genoese before yielding, op.cit., vol. iii, p. 236.

91. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni, ed. Segarizzi, ii, p.13.

war. This is made clear by Fleuranges when he notes that "... war (is the) noblest pursuit for a prince or gentleman, when it is a just quarrel⁹²;" and nothing could be so manifestly unjust as warring against one's sovereign, nothing so laudable as supporting his cause. The reverse side of this sense of honour, an intolerant pride, could be less helpful however. It was reported that many company captains - and these included Duras and Fontrailles - had not deigned to serve under La Palice in his campaign in Friuli in 1511, whilst the same unfortunate man seems to have been begrudged the devotion of Béarn and Lautrec when he took command of the army in Lombardy the following year⁹³. The loyalty of French captains to the King was no dumb submission to his will - even if one might be forgiven for sometimes believing so, in view of the obsequiousness of tone revealed in some of their letters to him - but a submission on condition of fair treatment and respect for their status. In its turn this loyalty was the reflection of something more personal, the essential determinant of behaviour, a code of honour which is best characterised by a contemporary appellation which became a cliché - "knight without fear or reproach". This term was applied by biographers to their noble subjects - men like Bayard and La Trémoille, was used to epitomise the qualities of a knight like Fontrailles and was inscribed on the tomb of Gratien d'Aguerre.⁹⁴

92. Fleuranges, op.cit., p. 278.

93. Diarii, vol. xiii, cols. 242-3 and xiv, col. 317.

94. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, vol. iii, p. 143; Jaurgain "Profils basques", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, iv, p. 145.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ITALIAN ENVIRONMENT

Soldiers were almost universally unpopular in Renaissance Europe. Bands of armed men living within a community or moving through the countryside caused perpetual conflict with local populations. When Charles VIII was collecting money in 1494 for his forthcoming Neapolitan venture, one of the incentives offered to the French taxpayer was that the expedition would rid the country of troops, "... which would be a relief for the people and would bring an end to extortion¹." In later 1498 Louis XII wrote to his generals of finance to authorize payments to certain officials who had escorted a body of horse, including men of the Albret company, through Languedoc on its way to Burgundy and Champagne, so that the troops might travel "... with the least oppression of the poor people as possible²." In the same year the King granted an indemnity to the Norman convent of Royal Pré in consideration for the damage it had suffered at the hands of members of the Foix company³. A list of complaints or doléances of the three

1. B.N., fr. 21604, no. 995.

2. B.N., fr. 25718, no. 17.

3. Catalogue analytique des archives de M. le baron de Joursanvault (Paris, 1838), no 1631. The soldiers in question are in fact referred to as "men of the King of Navarre", but it seems likely that this means members of the company of Jean de Foix-Narbonne, pretender to the throne of Navarre, rather than troops of the veritable King, Jean d'Albret, who did not possess a compagnie d'ordonnance at this time.

Estates of Languedoc, published early in Louis' reign, is heavy with criticism of the army: the soldiers in garrison at Narbonne would not pay for their supplies, claiming that they themselves had not been paid. In addition, they misbehaved by extorting money and violating women. The Estates wanted to be rid of garrisons and expressed concern that armies move rapidly through their province and not linger⁴. These indications of the friction between soldier and civilian within France should lead us to be careful to distinguish between the different levels of hostility which greeted the French soldier in Italy, as far as is possible - hostility towards him as a foreigner, as an invader and conqueror, and as a member of an ill-disciplined and unpredictable group of armed men. The dearest wish of any municipality was to be spared conversion to a barrack⁵. The French army was not alone in being unwelcome in town and countryside in Italy. The Spanish chronicler of the Ravenna campaign details the trials of Ramón de Cardona's army as it marched north from Naples to Emilia in 1511, entirely through officially friendly territory. At Roccasecca, still in the Regno, forcible entry had to be gained to the town, whilst later, near Vorsano in the papal

4. B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 68 vo. - 73.

5. In December 1502, for instance, the city of Milan complained of abuse by royal troops, asked that the latter be withdrawn from the duchy and implored that "neither in town nor country the Milanese people be oppressed by the burden of lodging (soldiers)," Pélissier, Documents pour l'histoire de la domination française dans le Milanais, p. 70.

states, a pitched battle was fought with local inhabitants⁶. Contemporaries feared armies in peacetime as well as wartime, in the same way as they feared the civilian mob.

The invasion of Charles VIII undoubtedly opened a new era in Italian history - from now on the political fortunes of the peoples of the peninsula were to be determined at least as much by the strategies and whims of foreign princes and powers as by their own policies. Foreign intervention in Italian affairs was not in itself a new phenomenon however, and indeed the Holy League of Venice of 1454 had in part been designed to remove the threat of external involvement, particularly in view of the distasteful activities of French troops during the recent war for the succession of Milan⁷. Educated Italians were conscious of a common kinship, if not nationality, amongst the peoples of the peninsula, and this awareness was probably heightened after 1494, with the embarrassing failure of Italian arms to provide effective resistance to foreign invasion. The contemporary commentator, Cagnola, makes the Marquis of Mantua say before the battle of Fornovo that the allied army was about to fight for the honour of Italy and to demonstrate her military prowess. The fact that these aims were not obviously achieved - in as much as the Italians suffered heavier casualties in the battle than the French - is explained away by Cagnola in terms of the difference between the races, for "the French are more cruel and bloodthirsty, the Italians more merciful and benign⁸." The defeat of Venice by the French in 1509

6. Torres, Sucesos de las armas de España en Italia, pp.234-9.

7. G. Mattingly, Renaissance diplomacy (Peregrine edition, 1965), pp. 81-2.

8. G.P.Cagnola, Storia de Milano (1023-1497) in A.S.I., vol. iii (1842), pp. 199-200.

came as a shock to some in Italy, according to Guicciardini, for with the subjection of the other states of the peninsula the Republic had become the repository of Italian pride, "... had, above all others, maintained the common fame and estimation..."⁹ Whatever the political differences between the Italian states, they nonetheless constituted a self-conscious and exclusive community whose boundaries were breached when the Frenchman, and after him the Spaniard, Switzer and German, crossed the Alps or disembarked in Naples. The French soldier and his fellow ultramontanes could expect to be greeted by some in Italy not only as foreigners but also as 'barbarians', the name by which all those from outside the Italian community were sometimes collectively known.

However, although it is clear that a sense of Italian kinship existed, its political significance remained negligible. The foreign policies of princes and republics continued to be determined almost exclusively by considerations of dynastic and particularist advantage, and the French never had to fight a campaign in the peninsula without the support of Italian allies. Nor did the rulers of the states of Italy enjoy any automatic devotion from their subjects. Outside the republics of Venice and Florence, these rulers were almost all tyrants of dubious legitimacy and there was no shortage of powerful malcontents in Naples, Milan or the papal states on whom the French might rely for aid - the invasion of the Milanese in 1499 was even led by a Lombard exile, Trivulzio. As for popular nationalism it is doubtful that it existed at all in

9. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, publ. by Panigada, vol. ii, p. 283. At the same time, notes the author, others relished the humiliation of Venice.

Renaissance Italy. Certainly it did not express itself in any desire for national self-determination and it is interesting that when the Milanese rebelled against French rule they cried 'Sforza!', not 'Milan!' It was not so much the nationality of a ruler that was important but rather the quality of his administration.

According to Jean d'Auton the Milanese always supported the winning side¹⁰. The French never had to besiege the city of Milan during our period, the defeat of the field-army of the Sforza sufficing to yield the capital into their hands. Furthermore the popularity of the French in Lombardy was at first enhanced by the strange belief that the subjects of the King of France only paid taxes if they wished. When in 1499 Trivulzio demanded the customary excise payment from Piacenza, the city fathers replied that they were now "... under the Royal Majesty of France, by reason of which all ought to have been free", they having lately rescinded the Sforza toll in Louis XII's name¹¹. Indeed it was the fiscal policy of the rulers of Lombardy which more than anything determined the level of their acceptability. Ludovic Sforza undermined the loyalty of many by his financial exactions. In 1495 the rebels of Novara (which had been entered by the Duke of Orléans) had torn up the salt-tax account books, crying "long live France,

10. Auton, vol. i, p. 225.

11. D. M. Bueno de Mesquita, "Ludovic Sforza and his vassals", in Italian Renaissance Studies, ed. E.F. Jacob (London, 1960), p. 214.

death to the gabella!¹² " The French invasion of 1499 provided the occasion for another outburst of vengeance when in Milan the ducal treasurer was hacked to death¹³. As it became apparent that Louis XII intended to maintain Sforza's taxes, his popularity naturally slumped and in October 1499 there was a riot in the capital, which led the King to exempt the city from the wine-tax in return for an oath of fidelity¹⁴. Eventually Louis, in Lombardy as well as in France, came to be remembered rather fondly for the moderation of his financial demands. Certainly this was the opinion of the Milanese patrician, Prato: "truly in (Louis') thirteen years as Duke of Milan we never paid taxes except for the fine for our rebellion...", he maintained¹⁵. Even though Prato seems to be referring only to direct taxation, and not the regular sales-taxes or excises, his memory deceived him, for the French certainly placed extraordinary imposts on the Lombards, such as the subsidy of 100,000 ducats required by Louis XII to help his Venetian campaign in 1509¹⁶.

12. Cagnola, op.cit., p. 197.

13. Storia di Milano (Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri), vol. vii (1956), p. 504.

14. Ibid., p. 405, n.3 and Prato, Storia di Milano, in A.S.I., vol. iii, pp. 234-5.

15. Ibid., p. 325.

16. In April 1509 Pandolfini reported that Chaumont d'Amboise had arranged with representatives from the cities of the duchy that the capital should contribute 45% of this subsidy and the provincial towns the remainder, Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, vol. ii, p. 304.

In retrospect Louis XII's regime in Milan appeared financially benign. The weight of Sforza taxation following the expulsion of the French in 1512 caused civil disturbances, beginning in July of that year and culminating in the serious disorder of June 1515, when Massimiliano Sforza had to abandon his proposed impost after armed conflict between Milanese citizens and his own Swiss guard, amidst cries of "no more taxes"¹⁷. The new Swiss-dominated administration had quickly come to be unfavourably compared with its predecessor, for in September 1512 the Venetian College heard that a large tax had been imposed on Milan, leading to popular protests that it had been better to pay under the French, when the money had at least stayed in Lombardy, than now when it all went into Swiss pockets¹⁸. In 1515 Massimiliano managed to raise fanatical support from the lower orders in Milan, helped by a promise to abolish the gabella, whilst later in the year, upon his victory, Francis I imposed a largish demand, to help to pay off the defeated but still dangerous Swiss army in Lombardy, and immediately promised not to do the same again¹⁹. The French continued to be resented by most Milanese as an occupying power: in 1516 the Venetian envoy Trevisan wrote that the Lombards hated all non-Italians and hankered after

17. G.M. Burigozzo, Cronaca di Milano (1500-44), in A.S.I., iii, pp.424-5, and Prato, op.cit., pp. 328-31.

18. Diarii, vol. xv, cols. 46-7.

19. Prato, op.cit., pp. 338 and 348.

the house of Sforza²⁰. His successor confirmed this opinion some four years later. Most Milanese now inclined to the Ghibelline party, because of their hatred of the French, who had been introduced by the Guelfs, notably Trivulzio. "The Milanese would have liked a duke, so that offices would have been open to them and they could have raised their sons in the court of an Italian prince; but this was very true: that having to put up with ultra-montanes, they affirmed that the French were better than the others, using many reasons as evidence...²¹." It is clear that the sentiments outlined by the Venetian applied in particular to the Milanese of quality, and they betray a concern for personal advancement and a general attachment to Italian ways rather than a longing for home-rule.

At the popular level dissatisfaction with French rule had perhaps more to do with a hostility towards government as such than with patriotism, and particularly a hatred both of taxation, as we have seen, and of soldiers. But when the French were in control such hostility expressed itself in racial terms. Xenophobia had its roots in ignorance of the foreigner: Prato notes, for example, that when the Gascon infantry lodged outside the gates of Milan in September 1499, the inhabitants "... thought them most odd, being unfamiliar with their barbarous speech and their

20. Diarii, vol. xxiii, col. 169.

21. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al senato, ed. Segarizzi, vol. ii, pp. 22 and 29.

customs.²²" But it was raised to a pitch by the brutality of the French soldier. In waging war the French made few concessions to humanity. An historian of Charles VIII's campaign wrote that they "believed they had a right to kill until all resistance stopped²³." Jean d'Auton reports the words of two sets of heralds calling for the surrender of Italian towns. In 1500 Pisa was warned that "... the way of the French was to abandon all towns and castles taken by assault to fire and sword." To Capua it was announced the following year that should an assault be necessary "... the sword would spare neither sex²⁴," and here the threat was fulfilled. Often brutality was premeditated and sometimes not even justified by desire for revenge, but simply used in the interests of terror: a little before the sack of Capua, the two hundred men of the garrison of Marigliano, in the Kingdom of Naples, were hanged from the battlements of the place, because they had taken too long to decide on surrender²⁵. As for Lombardy, the first campaign of 1499 began with the massacre of the Milanese garrisons at Rocca d'Arazzo and Annona and was clinched by the fall of Alessandria, which was ransacked²⁶. When La Trémoille

22. Prato, op.cit., p. 224.

23. B.N., fr. 17519, fol. 133.

24. Auton, i, p. 302 and ii, p. 40.

25. Ibid., ii, p.44.

26. Ibid., i, pp. 21, 26 and 71.

led the relief army into Lombardy in the counter-offensive of the following year, his standard depicted a bloody sword, a flame and a whip²⁷. A Venetian correspondent thought that the French were at their most vicious when on the defensive, for "there was no more vile a people when they were afraid²⁸." But their violence in general was proverbial, and Prato noted the current saying that "there was no fury greater than that of the French²⁹." However, if French armies excelled in brutality they by no means monopolised it. When Ludovic Sforza retook Vigevano in February 1500 he had its castellan and three other officers hanged, whilst in 1509 the Venetians abandoned their own recaptured town of Treviglio to the depredations of their Romagnol infantry, as a reward for services rendered.³⁰

The viciousness of the French towards their enemies must go some way towards explaining those outbreaks of frenzied hatred of the invader which erupted in times of crisis. In February 1500 the army escaping from the capital had to fight its way along roads blocked by peasant bands³¹. Indeed many Frenchmen were assassinated in the Milanese during the decline in their fortunes in early 1500³². After the defeat of Novara in 1513 the few hundred French troops who had entered Milan were fallen upon by mobs and in Pavia Frenchwomen were attacked³³.

27. Pélissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol ii, p.178.

28. Diarii, xiii, col. 86.

29. Prato, op.cit., p. 229.

30. Pélissier, op.cit., ii, p. 164; Diarii, viii, col.316.

31. Auton, i, p. 168.

32. Pélissier, op.cit., p.159.

33. Prato, op.cit. p.316; Burigozzo, op.cit., p. 423; B.N. n.a.fr. 5126, fol. 56.

Before Marignano Milan was at the mercy of gangs of anti-French terrorists who murdered those suspected of gallic sympathies without hesitation³⁴. On the other hand a sullen resentment of the French seems to have been general at all times in Lombardy. Indeed the French themselves were under no illusions about their popularity: in 1501, one of their captains maintained that the duchy was only waiting for an appropriate occasion to rebel³⁵; the Emperor Maximilian wrote in early 1510 that the French troops at Verona would be unlikely to move eastwards to his aid for fear of insurrection in Lombardy³⁶; and with the Swiss invasion late in the following year French morale in Milan sank to new depths, the Florentine ambassador predicting that the Swiss would find favour with the Lombards, who were "... ill-disposed towards those who behaved badly³⁷." When the final collapse came in June 1512 it was helped by the odium with which the French were tainted³⁸. However, this resentment was never either strong or widespread enough to endanger French rule until after this had first been undermined by foreign invasion, whilst in the case of the Swiss attacks of 1510 and 1511 even invasion was insufficient

34. Prato, op.cit., p. 338.

35. Auton, ii, p. 128.

36. Correspondance de ... Maximilien Ier. et de Marguerite d'Autriche, ed. M. le Glay, S.H.F., vol. i (Paris, 1839), p. 237.

37. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, p. 545. A Venetian report noted at this time that the French did not trust the Milanese, Diarii, xiii, col. 367.

38. F. Vettori, Sommario della storia d'Italia (1511-27), in A.S.I., vol. vi, appendice (1848), p.287.

to prompt rebellion³⁹. Popular animosity was caused not so much by the fact of French rule as by the evil behaviour of the garrison, explaining why opposition remained largely sporadic and localised. Even during the years of peace in Lombardy the French maintained a sizeable complement of troops there. The most serious violence arose from the robberies of unpaid soldiers: in January 1504, for example, Chaumont d'Amboise wrote that "... he had been informed that peasants were gathering on all sides and attacking gendarmes for taking food without payment, and already they had killed some of them⁴⁰." The day to day activities of soldiers could offend even the mildest spirit and Prato, who was by no means entirely unfavourable to the French, noted that the troops in Milan in 1499 behaved more or less well, according to circumstances, but he was hurt that they should have used holy places to stable their horses⁴¹. The Venetian Caroldo

39. The Swiss pursued a deliberate policy in both 1510 and 1511 of trying to win over the Lombards, by behaving with exemplary courtesy on the march south, although they did great damage in retreat, Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p.544; Kohler, Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie, p. 264; Prato, op.cit., p. 287. However, these tactics were of no benefit, for the fearful inhabitants of Milan appear to have shared Prato's view that the invaders were simply "uncivilised barbarians", ibid., p. 286.

40. B.N. Mélanges de Colbert 13, fol. 43 vo..

41. Prato, op.cit., pp. 228-9.

observed in 1520 that "the French were hated for their arrogance and the misbehaviour of their gendarmes, for which there was no remedy," for "... it was impossible for the French not to be haughty and not to consume a world of things⁴²."

The concentration of contemporary commentators on the periods of French conquest and collapse in Lombardy may serve to distort our picture of Franco-Milanese relations. Little is told of those intervening years during which French rule was stabilised and companies garrisoned out in provincial towns as they were at home. The army did not remain simply an occupying force but was to some extent absorbed into Milanese life. We have seen how a number of Italian soldiers were recruited into the ranks, how some units spent many years in the peninsula and how regular bases were established. Roger de Béarn had his wife with him at Trezzo in 1512-13⁴³, an indication of a degree of assimilation. Although Milan never became just another province of France it acquired the status of a satellite, closely tied to the metropolis by such means as an efficient postal service - in 1502 the trans-Alpine roads were improved⁴⁴ and the duchy had its own set of liveried couriers, bearing the quartered arms of France and Milan⁴⁵. Some at least of the King of France's Milanese subjects showed their delight at the success of his arms, even if this was primarily because of their hatred of his enemies

42. Caroldo's relation, in Relazioni, ii, pp. 22 and 17 respectively.

43. Diarii, vol. xv, cols 460-1.

44. Auton, iii, p. 89.

45. Ordonnances des rois de France de la troisième race, vol. xxi, ed. J.M. Pardessus (Paris, 1849), p. 405. See also E. Vaillé, Histoire générale des postes françaises, vol. ii (Paris, 1949), pp. 78 and 326-7.

rather than their sympathy with his cause: the news of Agnadello was greeted with joy in the capital, and Prato for one was only sorry that Louis XII did not go on to capture Venice itself, whilst French successes against the Holy League (such as Trivulzio's recapture of Mirandola and Bologna in 1511 and the raising of the siege of Bologna the next year) were followed by celebrations in Milan lasting days⁴⁶. The enemies of the French also tended to associate the Milanese with their adversaries - when the Venetians retook Brescia in early 1512 Milanese shops in the town were ransacked by local partisans⁴⁷.

Charles VIII's conquest of Naples in 1495 had at first foreshadowed Louis' takeover of Milan. Commynes summed up affairs by saying that "the people had adored the French as saints, but this opinion had not prevailed ... owing to their disorder and plundering"⁴⁸. Charles' army had been so confident of its good reception that the knights had no longer troubled to wear battle-gear after crossing the Garigliano⁴⁹. However, even the reduction of the Neapolitan tax-load by some 260,000 ducats⁵⁰ was insufficient to prevent violent rebellion in the face of the

46. Prato, op.cit., pp. 276-7, 284 and 289.

47. Diarii, xiii, col. 445.

48. Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. 11, p. 462.

49. Delaborde, L'expédition de Charles VIII, p. 556.

50. La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, p. 214. The cut was of the order of 300,000 ducats, according to Boislisle, in Notice sur Etienne de Vesc, p. 136.

abuses of the occupying forces. Unfortunately the immense distance from France and the presence of a Spanish army in Calabria meant that the French were unable to ride the storm of revolt, as later they were able to do in the north. Besides, Charles' conquest was infused with a fatal measure of carelessness, as if few could really believe that the acquisition of Naples could be made permanent. The second French conquest was happily devoid of his characteristic and seems to have occasioned less popular hostility. Again however the French were unable to bring their Neapolitan campaign to a successful conclusion and although there is some evidence that they at first enjoyed wider popular support than their Spanish opponents⁵¹, this was alienated by constant war. The overall impression of the political climate in the Kingdom of Naples is one of comparative under-development, at least outside the capital and its environs. Relations between the Frenchman and Neapolitan seem to have turned more exclusively on the simple tension between soldier and civilian, as in the homeland, than they did in urbanised Lombardy, with its political division of Guelf and Ghibelline. Towns which were brutalised by French garrisons, like Aquila in 1495 and Castellaneta in 1503, might appeal to foreigners for relief⁵²,

51. This was the view in 1502 of the Venetian governor of Monopoli, Diarii, vol. iv, col. 372, and later of Guicciardini, op.cit., ii, pp. 26-7.

52. L'Aquila appealed to the Venetians, Malipiero, Annali veneti, in A.S.I., vol. vii, pt. I, p. 338, Castellaneta to the Spaniards at Taranto, Diarii, iv, col. 772.

but in general the struggle for power was conducted above the heads of the local inhabitants, especially after 1501 when the Aragonese dynasty was removed from the scene.

The allegiance of the far-flung towns of the Regno depended even more surely upon the accidents of war than did that of those in the north, where there was a greater variety of response to the success or failure of French arms⁵³.

When the French came to establish their dominion over the former Venetian lands of eastern Lombardy in 1509, they were faced with rather different problems from the ones they had encountered in Milan and Naples. This was not only because the dispossessed landlord continued to maintain credible opposition to French rule, thus providing a focus for disaffected elements in the conquered territories, but also because Venice, alone of the major states of Italy, inspired something amongst her subjects - even those in the cities of the terra firma - which was akin to modern patriotism⁵⁴. This was not enough to encourage much active resistance to the French advance on the part of

53. Although the city of Milan itself never waited to be attacked by any invading force, but simply opened its gates after seeking assurances against possible abuse by troops, other towns of the duchy were not always so passive. In early 1500 Tortona rebelled against Sforza and admitted the French, whilst Vigevano opposed ducal forces. The Helvetian regime of Massimiliano Sforza was even more obnoxious than his father's had been, and the approach of the French army in 1513 led to rebellion in Alessandria and Pavia, whilst Voghera refused entry to the Swiss and was sacked as a result, Prato, op.cit., pp. 241-2 and 311-2.

54. Mattingly, Renaissance diplomacy, p. 88.

civilians however⁵⁵, nor to protect from menace those two traditional objects of popular hatred, the taxman and the Jew; in Crema, for instance, the mob was only dissuaded from attacking the salt-depots and the houses of Jewish money-lenders by the intervention of prominent citizens⁵⁶. But despite the ease of the French takeover of eastern Lombardy it was not long before reports of widespread dissatisfaction with their rule became frequent. Already in August 1509 Pandolfini had remarked that the newly conquered lands were discontented with the French, who treated them badly⁵⁷. By December the Signory heard that Brescia, Bergamo, Crema and Cremona were all poised to rebel, they wrongly believing that the Venetians had recaptured Verona⁵⁸. It was not until the Venetian offensive of early 1512, however, that general insurrection broke out in these restless towns. The Brescians, who according to

55. All the major towns between the Adda and the Mincio rivers yielded rapidly after the battle of Agnadello, even strong places like Brescia. Indeed the ease of their advance eastwards seems to have surprised the French somewhat - see, for instance, a letter from the camp, of 22nd May, in B.N., n.a.fr. 7647, fol. 236 vo..
56. Sforza Benvenuti, Storia di Crema, vol. i, p. 312. The French invasion of the Kingdom of Naples in 1495 had prompted widespread violence against Jewish property, Malipiero, op.cit., p. 333.
57. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques, ii, p. 409.
58. Diarii, vol. ix, cols. 380-1.

their rebel leader were "sick of the French"⁵⁹, "raised the Venetian flag and opened their gates to Andrea Gritti in early February. Gritti himself soon reported that the citizens of Bergamo and Crema were in arms and had sent envoys to Brescia"⁶⁰. Nevertheless, French retaliation quickly demonstrated that the majority were not prepared to die for their cause. The inhabitants of Brescia only began to resist the French assault when it became evident that their lives and property were threatened; the women of the town hurled stones and tiles onto the enemy from the windows of their houses and there were bitter complaints that if their menfolk had done as much Brescia might have been saved for Venice - whilst the women had done their duty the men had hidden in their homes"⁶¹. Meanwhile, news of the sack of Brescia was enough to bring rebellious Bergamo to terms.

Perhaps the most partisan of all the lost cities of the Republic was Crema, "... more favourable to Venice than the others", according to reports in August 1509⁶². The enthusiasm of some at the change of government in May does not seem to have lasted long, as the tax burden had not been reduced⁶³. The Signory maintained high hopes that Crema could be subverted, hopes which appear to have fuelled exaggerated claims about the extent of disaffection in the town: in April 1510 it was erroneously reported that Crema

59. Ibid., xiii, col. 400.

60. Ibid., col. 449.

61. Ibid., cols. 516, 512-3 and 522-3.

62. Ibid., ix, col. 99.

63. Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., pp. 313 and 315.

had risen and all the Frenchmen there been killed, whilst the claims which reached Venice in early 1512 that the town was in arms were only a little less fanciful⁶⁴. However, such reports do reveal that French rule in Crema was by no means entirely secure and indeed in early 1512 there had been a move to expel a group of citizens of suspect loyalties⁶⁵. The commotion in Crema in January and February 1512 may have worried the members of the Duras company, which was stationed in the town at the time, but it cannot have caused them much fright, particularly in view of the impregnability of Crema castle. Few can have viewed their position with as much equanimity some months later, after the French collapse in Lombardy, when the garrison at Crema was cut off by the advance of the forces of the Holy League. The remaining stock of the French in Crema was finally sabotaged by Duras' decision in June to evict the majority of the beleaguered town's inhabitants. It was reported that, apparently even before the expulsions, the CremaSchi had expressed the wish "... to cut the French there to pieces." Later a Venetian captain noted that the refugees "... were anxious to recapture Crema even if they had to make a staircase of their bodies and fill up the town's ditches with them⁶⁶." The

64. Diarii, x, col. 124 and xiii, cols. 421-2, 449 and 463.

65. Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., p. 321.

66. Diarii, vol. xiv, cols. 313 and 405. An eighteenth-century historian of Crema, writing of the expulsions, described Duras as "a hard-hearted man of bestial callousness", Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., p. 325.

Venetian commander had to deny access to the town to the exiles after Duras' surrender, in order to protect the French from their wrath. However, even at the end the French were not without their local supporters, as is shown by the insistence of Duras in the negotiations for surrender that certain Cremaschi and Parmensi be granted pardons and that there be no reprisals after his departure.⁶⁷

One of the chief accusations levelled by the French against Italians was that of perfidy - governments, with their dissembling diplomats, changed sides without compunction whilst the people in general would at first welcome with Frenchman with humble professions of devotion and at the next moment be at his back. These are of course characteristic ploys of the weak struggling to survive amongst the powerful, and in the circumstances only to be expected. On the other hand, hypocrisy did not always colour Franco-Italian relations. For example, the joy with which the Bolognese greeted the French in 1512 was genuine enough, for, as the Spaniards had heard, every citizen would have sooner died than submit to papal lordship. Indeed the Bolognese composed an ode to the glorious memory of Gaston de Foix⁶⁸. By contrast, the French-sponsored Council of Pisa seems to have aroused feelings of unmitigated detestation amongst normally friendly, or at least neutral,

67. Diarii, xv, cols. 82 and 56 respectively.

68. Torres, Sucesos de las armas, p. 247 and Prato, Storia di Milano, p. 296.

natives: in Pisa itself, in November 1511, the crowd tried to force its way into the lodgings of one of the dissident Cardinals, where their escort, Lautrec, was also staying at the time, crying "Kill! Kill!" Meanwhile Lautrec's soldiers were attacked in the streets⁶⁹. The Council later moved to Milan, where its members were hardly more welcome: they were "a plague worse than the Swiss", according to Prato. The papal interdict which the Council brought down on the heads of the Milanese was almost universally respected and performance of the divine office in the city thus virtually suspended altogether⁷⁰. Contempt for the Council of Pisa cannot have been entirely uniform however, for the Venetians heard in March 1512 of a lampoon put on in Milan, when thirty youths dressed themselves as Cardinals and one as the Pope, attired like a prostitute with a mitre⁷¹. Besides, the question of the Council of Pisa was a special case, involving as it did the crucial problem of salvation. Even the French were worried by the implications of their defiance of Rome. Despite widespread anti-clericalism

69. Diarii, vol. xiii, col. 281. For an account of this episode, which seems to have done more to sabotage French plans for using Pisa as the venue of the Council than all the earnest protestations of the Signory of Florence, see Bridge, A history of France, vol. iv, pp. 113-16.

70. Prato, op.cit., pp. 281 and 285.

71. Diarii, xiv, col. 80.

amongst soldiers⁷², warring against the Holy League and excommunication caused considerable distress⁷³.

Yet beneath the politicking and temporary accommodations lay a more or less constant current of hatred of Frenchmen by Italians, which seems to have stemmed to some degree from the French contempt for the martial qualities of the latter. The foreigners who took part in the Italian Wars brought with them to the peninsula all the national prejudices which had been developed over generations, and no doubt had them reinforced by further contact with each other in Italy. Paolo Giovio writes that "... there was a habit amongst the soldiers... that... when their squadrons approached and they entered a skirmish, they used to berate one another with insults, according to the notorious failings of their respective nations. So the Spaniards called the French "borrachi", meaning drunkards... and the French held the former to be ... thieves, fit for the gallows; just as the Germans used to call the Swiss "covamali", that is cowherds, to express the baseness of their nation, whilst the

72. Gaguin's gendarme accuses his priest of being a grasping miser, "Le débat du laboureur, du prestre et du gendarme," in Epistole et Orationes, publ. by Thuasne, vol. ii, pp. 360-65. Interestingly, this characterisation of the cleric as a man greedy for money is echoed by Bayard's biographer: just before an assault on Padua in 1509, he tells us, priests with the army took bribes to hear the confession of gendarmes; the latter also left their valuables in the safe-keeping of their confessors, a fact which prompts our biographer to speculate that these last no doubt hoped that the trusting soldiers would die at the breach, *Le Loyal serviteur*, Histoire de Bayard, ed. Roman, p. 180.

73. After their recapture of Brescia in February 1512, the French announced their intention to "make a new Pope", since they were all excommunicants, Diarii, xiii, col. 523.

Swiss dismissed the Germans as "smocari", which in their language means filthy layabouts; but everyone termed the Italians "buggiaroni" - pederasts⁷⁴." To the traditional catalogue of Italian faults was added a new one by the wars in the peninsula, or at least an old prejudice was strengthened, that of cowardice or effeminacy. Commynes writes of Charles VIII's expedition that the French "became so full of their own glory that it did not even seem to them that Italians were men"⁷⁵." The Milanese troops who evacuated Alessandria precipitately in 1499 are dismissed by Jean d'Auton as "soft and effeminate" and like "sheep"⁷⁶. Sforza's army at Novara in 1500 was composed of nothing but "canaille", according to Yves d'Alègre and other French captains⁷⁷. In the popular imagination Lombard soldiers were reduced to little more than sheep for slaughter, as a contemporary song of gendarmes demonstrates⁷⁸. The satisfaction which Italians derived from the triumph of thirteen of their countrymen over a similar number of Frenchmen, in a formal combat in

74. Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marchese di Pescara, publ. by Panigada, p. 136.

75. Commynes, op.cit., ii, p. 485.

76. Auton, i, p. 73.

77. Ibid., pièces annexes, p. 350.

78. Chansons du XVIe siècle, publ. by G. Paris, pp. 129-30.

Apulia in 1503, should be seen in the context of a recent history of French denigration of Italian manhood. After all, the combat came about as a result of the insults to Italian arms delivered by a captive French knight, who had predicted that had an earlier tournament between Frenchmen and Spaniards been fought with Italians the French would have won easily - all Italians were "traitors, poisoners of men and pederasts"⁷⁹. It was surely the need to punish the French for their arrogance that led, for example, to the vicious assault on the unfortunate Bâtard de Luxe, gendarme of the Aguerre company, when he was returning north from Naples; at Brescello in Emilia he was insulted, punched and even tortured by a commander of the Order of St. John.⁸⁰

On the other hand neither the French nor their enemies entirely dispensed with those ceremonies of war which were designed to temper the brutish nature of combat, although the former do seem to have prided themselves on their no-nonsense approach to warfare, compared with the outdated antics of Italians. On the 15th of August 1499, for instance, the French army observed a truce during their siege of Annona, owing to the solemnity of that day in the religious calendar⁸¹. Battles and sieges were preceded by

79. Auton, ii, pp. 128-9.

80. Péliissier, "Note e documenti su Luigi XII e Ludovico Sforza", in A.S.I., ser. 5, vol. xxiii, p. 154.

81. Péliissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, ii, p. 7.

the summonses of heralds and formal challenges to combat. Chivalrous gestures were prompted by the demands of good form, and soldiers as pragmatic as Gaston de Foix and Gonzalo de Córdoba issued calls to single combat to their opposite number⁸². Moreover French knights appear to have been able to mix easily with their peers in the enemy camp in those moments of civilised contact, during a truce or whilst engaged in negotiations or parleys. After the surrender of Crema Duras' men mingled with their Venetian counterparts so that the two sides were like brothers⁸³. Indeed relations between French captains and their Venetian enemies were remarkably cordial, if we are to take the behaviour of our Gascons as typical: Duras was well disposed towards the Venetians and entertained one of their senior commanders to lunch in Crema castle in September 1512; meanwhile his son, a hostage for his observance of the terms of surrender, was regaled by the enemy and himself invited his hosts to a return dinner for the next day⁸⁴. Roger de Béarn had treated a Venetian captain of Stradiots to a fine repast at Trezzo in July; the purpose of the dinner was to explain to the enemy how France only desired peace with Venice⁸⁵. After yielding Bergamo castle later

82. Lojendio, Gonzalo de Córdoba, p. 185 and Le loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 317, respectively.

83. Diarii, vol. xv, col. 81.

84. Ibid., cols. 82 and 103.

85. Ibid., xiv, cols. 606-7.

in the year, the French castellan (who may have been Lautrec) became friendly with Lippomano, the Venetian whom Duras had entertained at Crema, and they promised to keep up a correspondence after they had parted⁸⁶.

French relations with the Spaniards were somewhat less cordial. According to the Venetian governor of Trani, writing in March 1503, "the French were so proud that they had no respect for the Spaniards⁸⁷." The campaigns in Naples earned the latter - particularly the footsoldiers - some grudging regard from the French for their fighting qualities, but on the whole the Spaniards never seem to have overcome their image of social inferiority in French eyes. Even Roger de Béarn, a man from the Franco-Spanish frontier and of by no means unimpeachable pedigree himself, was observed in 1512 to have had no great regard for his Spanish enemies at Trezzo⁸⁸. It had been reported in 1511 that the French were anxious to crush Venice "because of so many dogs - Spaniards and Swiss - that she had put on their back⁸⁹." Indeed the Swiss eventually became quite the most loathsome of all France's enemies in Italy. A strong mutual antipathy developed between French Knights and Swiss mercenaries over the years of common service in the army of the King of France, at the root of which lay the hatred of class rather

86. Ibid., xv, col. 338. Lautrec was castellan of Bergamo, according to Kohler, op.cit., p. 491.

87. Diarii, vol. iv, col. 840.

88. Ibid., xv, col. 457.

89. Ibid., xiii, col. 242.

than national division. On the whole the man-at-arms despised his social inferiors in the other branches of the army: Gaguin's gendarme uses the terms 'villein' and 'footsoldier' interchangeably⁹⁰; Jean d'Auton, who simply echoes the views of his noble interlocutors, dismisses the role of the pioneer as a "vile office" and "base occupation"⁹¹. When French knights introduced such attitudes into their relations with the Swiss, the ever-present friction between horseman and footsoldier took a more serious turn, for the Swiss pikeman was no mere reflection of the supine French peasantry but a self-conscious professional and a member of an élite corps. But his conceit only made him more obnoxious to the French gendarme, whilst his greed for gain and his barbarity confirmed the latter's suspicion that at heart the Switzer was nothing but a villainous upstart. In short, it seems that the mutual hatred which developed between French and Swiss during the early Italian Wars did much to throw the Confederacy into the enemy camp after 1509. In 1511 the Swiss complaint, during negotiations for a possible renewal of the alliance with France, was that Louis XII had won his victories through their efforts and that it was time they were rewarded⁹². The grievance was identical in 1513, when La Trémoille was trying to buy off

90. Gaguin, "Le débat du laboureur...", in op.cit., p. 350.

91. Auton, vol. iii, p. 174.

92. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., vol. ii, p. 544.

the Swiss who were besieging Dijon: "are they who willingly endure cold, heat, hunger and thirst, and who expose themselves to peril of death in its service, not more beneficial to the public good than those who, beneath the guise of nobility, are always cosseted in luxury⁹³?" For Jean Bouchet this question demonstrated "... the superbly arrogant nature of the Swiss, who at that time had appointed themselves the correctors of princes⁹⁴." The victory at Marignano was to be all the more sweet in that it was achieved at the expense of these upstarts⁹⁵.

Of course something was known of these foreigners, Spaniards, Swiss and others, before the Italian Wars began. The Albanian light horsemen, the Stradiots, were however quite new. The French came to both fear and detest them as enemies, in fact viewed them "with more odium than any other troops", according to a Venetian report of 1512⁹⁶. As comrades of the French, on the other hand, the Stradiots appear to have been rather popular, for Chaumont d'Amboise wrote in 1504 of "... the Albanians, who, according to what was said, were the kindest companions in the world⁹⁷." The Stradiots were a mysterious breed; a French correspondent who had been at Fornovo wrote home in 1495 and

93. Bouchet, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 483.

94. Ibid., loc.cit..

95. A correspondent wrote from Milan, with evident satisfaction, that the French victory had "... deflated the arrogance of the Swiss nation...", B.N. Moreau 774, fol.7.

96. Diarii, xiii, col. 506.

97. B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 50 vo..

talked of these novel and only half-civilised horsemen:
 "...the Venetians have Greek, Albanian and Slav Stradiots, ugly men, wickedly bearded and looking like village curés. They wear neither shoes nor armour, but have a shield and ride Moorish horses which go like swallows! They carry a javelin, with a pennant, and a scimitar." The Frenchmen also mentioned their custom of decapitating their victims⁹⁸. The French were never entirely clear about the geographical origin of the Stradiots. One contemporary calls them "...subjects of the Venetians, ... from Romania, Morea and Albania", and elsewhere "all Greeks", and notes that they resembled Turks without turbans⁹⁹. The very obscurity of the Stradiot's origins made him more objectionable, for it seemed that he had come to Italy for no good reason save pleasure in annoying the French¹⁰⁰. As an enemy he was shown no quarter - he may have expected none - but his fighting qualities were sufficiently valued to encourage Louis XII and his captains to recruit large numbers into French service¹⁰¹.

98. La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins, p. 360.

99. B.N., fr. 17519, fol. 171.

100. Auton, 1, p. 253.

101. This ambivalence of feeling towards the stradiot must have had some echo in the relations between the Navarrese soldiers in the French army and their compatriots who formed such an important element in the celebrated infantry divisions of the Spanish army. Torres tells a story to illustrate the point: during the siege of Bologna by the forces of the Holy League in early 1512, a member of the French garrison, one Nante de Viamonte or Beaumont, tried to make contact with his uncle, Colonel Artieda, and his brother-in-law, Colonel Jaime Diaz, who were serving in the other camp; unluckily he was shot dead by another Navarrese colonel in the attempt, Sucesos de las armas, pp.256-7.

The expedition of Charles VIII was a national adventure, each step of which was publicised in France by means of printed bulletins - in the main copies of letters of the King or of others in his company¹⁰². For the French, we are told, Italy was a land awaiting rediscovery, a 'lost paradise', a place of sweet living and the home of the Roman tradition¹⁰³. Certainly a sense of excitement infuses the bulletins (those at least written after February 1495 when the success of the expedition seemed assured), a feeling which may have caused the Italian environment to appear larger than life: one French captain, for instance, writing from Rome in January 1495 and reporting on the projected advance into the Abruzzi, noted that L'Aquila "was scarcely much smaller than Paris" - a considerable exaggeration¹⁰⁴. Naples was not to disappoint the French however. The King himself thought his new realm "... a good and beautiful land, full of bounty and riches," and its capital "... gorgeous in every way...". The Cardinal St. Malo reported that Naples was "an earthly paradise". Particularly delightful were the Neapolitan gardens, with their fruits, flowers and songbirds¹⁰⁵.

102. J-P. Seguin, "La découverte de l'Italie par les soldats de Charles VIII," in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, ser. 6, vol. lvi (1961), pp. 127-34.

103. H. Hornik, "Three interpretations of the French Renaissance," in French humanism, 1470-1600, ed. W.L. Gundersheimer (London, 1969), pp. 19-47, p. 43.

104. La Pilorgerie, op.cit., p. 133.

105. Ibid., pp. 199, 218 and 452.

Printed bulletins continued to be produced during later years, describing French victories in Italy and other glamorous events such as royal entries into captured Italian cities, but the sense of wonder of the first expedition was never repeated. This was not only because of the novelty of the initial contact, but also because Naples - "this land of gaiety", in the words of an Imperial envoy in France¹⁰⁶ - held a special fascination, and the conquest of 1495 had been a carefree affair, made the more splendid by the presence of the King himself at the head of his army and the royal welcome provided by the Neapolitans. Northern Italy does not seem to have excited the imagination of the French to such a degree. A modern historian of the French Renaissance has tried to sabotage "the myth of the Italian Wars", which saw "... the troops of Charles VIII, barbarians in dress and behaviour, suddenly transformed into perfect Renaissance men upon contact with Italian civilisation: a miracle supposedly accomplished by the landscape, the classical remains and the new works of art¹⁰⁷." The greater impression made on the French by Naples would appear to support the view that the achievements of the Italian Renaissance had at first comparatively little impact on the invader - it was the exotic south rather than the northern heartlands of the Renaissance, in Tuscany and Lombardy, which held the stronger appeal.

106. Le Glay, Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche, vol. 1, p. 468.

107. F. Simone, The French Renaissance, trans. H. Gaston Hall (London, 1969), p. 39.

However, in Naples as well as in other parts of Italy, the response of French soldiers to their environment was determined in the main by the mundane aspects of everyday life - the exigencies of campaigning, the availability and quality of victuals and lodgings, relations with the natives, with colleagues and enemies, the perils and opportunities of war, disease and the weather. Commynes writes of the opening of Charles VIII's expedition that "that year all the wines of Italy were sour, and the troops did not like this any more than the air, which was so hot¹⁰⁸." Indeed complaints about the climate in all parts of the peninsula continued to be common in later years. Letters from Italy are dominated by military details, financial considerations and personal pleas and grievances. If these were the overriding concerns of the King's chief lieutenants (the men largely responsible for our surviving correspondence) we would hardly expect hard-bitten captains like Gratien d'Aguerre and Roger de Béarn, men who, to judge by the quality of their autographs, were scarcely literate, to have brought a more subtle imagination to bear on their surroundings. Even men of quality like Gaston de Foix and Jean de Duras appear to have possessed only a poor knowledge of

108. Commynes, op.cit., p. 456.

the Italian language¹⁰⁹. Gradually, however, the impact of Italian civilisation did come to be felt in France, although it was not until the reign of Francis I that its visible manifestation, in the form of architecture for example, became significant, and French captains were among those responsible for the process. It required a long and continuous association before this movement gathered strength, and by the third decade of the sixteenth century these conditions had been met: writing in 1525, Fleuranges recalled his first journey to Italy but purposely omitted any description of the Alps because by now "... so many people had seen them¹¹⁰." The north of Italy at least had become familiar territory.

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109. In writing to the Signory of Florence in September 1511, Foix used a secretary whose Italian was mediocre, A. Renaudet, Le Concile gallican de Pise-Milan (Paris, 1922), p. 253 and n. 158; Duras needed an interpreter to address the town council of Crema in 1512, Sforza Benvenuti, op.cit., p. 323. Other eminent Gascons seem to have been better equipped: Gaston's father, Jean de Foix-Narbonne, acted as an interpreter in 1494 for the Countess of Montferrat, whose French was poor, P. Desrey, De l'entreprise du voyage du roy Charles VIII, in Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France, ed. Cimber and Danjou, ser. I, vol. i (1834), p. 214. Roger de Gramont went on diplomatic missions to Rome and Bologna during the early years of Louis XII's reign, Diarii, vol. iii, cols 409 and 1486, and P. Ambri Berselli, "Sources de l'histoire de France, lettres inédites de Louis XII aux archives d'état de Bologne," in Revue Historique, vol. ccxviii (1957), pp. 261-78, p. 267.
110. Fleuranges, Histoire des choses mémorables, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xvi, p.191.

CHAPTER SEVENLOUIS D'ARMAGNAC, VICEROY OF NAPLES

Few lives can have been as cruelly deluded by tricks of fortune as that of Louis d'Armagnac. Born into one of the noblest houses of France and endowed with a propitious measure of Valois blood, Louis was nevertheless soon to fall into penurious anonymity upon the disgrace of his father. Raised up and reinstated by a new King, Charles VIII, the young man became an illustrious courtier and shared in the pompous triumphs of Charles' progress through Italy. Even these honours paled in comparison with the ultimate dignity of Viceroy in Naples, attained in 1501. Yet by 1503, after a life of only thirty years, Louis' mutilated corpse lay heaped with the other French dead on the field of Cerignola. One common thread seems to run through this life: at almost every turn the fortune of Armagnac was determined by the will of the King of France. Louis appears to typify a new generation of French peer who, after their fathers had been crushed by Louis XI and his daughter, Anne de Beaujeu, had nowhere else to turn but to the Crown itself to procure the honours which were their due.

On the 4th of August 1477, Jacques d'Armagnac, the former Duke of Nemours, was led from the Bastille to

Les Halles in Paris, to receive execution of his sentence for treason. After confessing his sins and then listing his debts of over 40,000 livres, Jacques recommended his children to the good graces of Louis XI. He was then brought out from the lofts of the fish market onto a temporary scaffold, and duly beheaded¹. Brantôme's assertion that two of Jacques' children were obliged by the King to witness the execution of their father is thought to be a piece of dramatic licence². However, the immediate fate of the children was scarcely less odorous. During their father's long captivity in Paris, they had lived miserably enough in the same city, in the care of some domestic servants. Jacques d'Armagnac left six legitimate offspring from his marriage with Louise d'Anjou, who died before her husband. Louis, ironically the godson of his father's tormentor, from whom he took his name, was born in 1472. He was the fifth child and the youngest of three boys. After the execution, the eldest son, Jacques, became the ward of Boffile de Juge, one of the beneficiaries of the confiscated estate of the late Jacques d'Armagnac, and the boy soon died at Perpignan, not without suspicion of foul play. Only in 1479 did the

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1. B. de Mandrot, "Jacques d'Armagnac, duc de Nemours", in *Revue Historique*, vol. xliii (1890), pp. 274-316 and xliv (1890), pp. 241-312; vol. xliv, pp. 304-6.
 2. Brantôme, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Mérimée and Lacour, vol. iii, p. 94; Mandrot, *op.cit.*, p. 306, n.2.

King look to the rest of the orphans, Jean, Louis, Marguerite, Catherine and Charlotte, when, following representations from relatives and friends, he ordered them into various religious houses to provide for their livelihood³.

A new King brought new hope. In 1483 Charles VIII called Jean and Louis d'Armagnac to Amboise⁴, and immediately the new tutors-curators of the boys⁵ began proceedings to restore their family estates. Firstly the legacy of the late Charles d'Anjou, comte de Maine, the children's maternal grandfather, was claimed. The climate of opinion was favourable, at Court, in Council and at the Estates-General at Tours, and, notwithstanding the objections of ^{the}royal procureur of the Parlement of Paris, the children of Jacques d'Armagnac and Louise d'Anjou were granted the lands of Guise, Le Nouvion, Châtellerault and a host of other lordships, principally in the Maine-Perche region, on the 5th. of March, 1484⁶.

3. Ibid., pp. 263 and 310-11; H. Stein, Charles de France (Paris, 1921), p. 212.

4. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 364.

5. According to their letters of appointment of the 12th. of November 1483, these were Jacques de Luxembourg, seigneur de Richebourg and maternal great-uncle of the children, and their uncle, Jean d'Armagnac, bishop of Castres; Guarcias Faur, president of the Parlement of Toulouse and former chancellor of Jean V, comte d'Armagnac, was appointed as a higher counsellor, ibid., no. 365. See also Mandrot, op.cit., p. 310, n.2. and 311.

6. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 364.

The restoration of Nemours came only a little later, it being granted to Jean d'Armagnac on the 2nd. of August⁷. Once these territories had been acquired, Jean proceeded to provide for his younger brother by making him count of Guise, whilst he himself took the title of Duke of Nemours⁸. These major gifts of Charles VIII were both confirmed later in the reign⁹. Jean and Louis had by no means recouped the entire estate of their forebears; in 1501, for example, the Duke of Bourbon bought off Armagnac's claim to the county of La Marche and other territories which Jacques d'Armagnac had held¹⁰. But there is no doubt that even by 1484 the sons of "poor Jacques" were already very rich. In that year they were able to guarantee their sister Catherine a dowry of 100,000 francs (in land and in yearly payments of 10,000 francs)¹¹. In 1489, Jean and Louis exchanged lordships worth 100,000 livres tournois with the house of Bourbon¹².

7. B.N., fr. 16589, fol. 66 vo.; again the Parlement of Paris opposed the alienation of Nemours, but in vain, Mandrot, op.cit., p. 311, n.4.

8. B.N., fr. 16589, fol. 183.

9. Guise on the 4th. of May 1492, fr. 2919, fol. 88; Nemours on the 2nd. of September, 1484 and the 29th. of March 1492, Mandrot, op.cit., p. 311 and B.N., fr. 16587, fol. 71.

10. Titres de Bourbon, vol. ii, no. 7524.

11. Ibid., no. 6876.

12. Ibid., no. 7065. In 1492 the brothers received 11,230 royaux d'or from the King for the exchange of the lordship of Chizé in Poitou, H. Stein, Inventaire analytique des ordonnances enregistrées au Parlement de Paris (Paris, 1908), no. 1563.

From the first, Louis appears to have had closer links with the King and Court than his brother. This was no doubt largely as a result of his smaller territorial fortune and fewer obligations as the younger son. Whilst Jean pursued the seigniorial claims of his family¹³, Louis became an established courtier. Jean was even technically the lord of Guise and Le Nouvion, for which he did homage in 1492¹⁴. Louis, however, enjoyed the titles and effective possession, by his brother's dispensation. In 1493 he styled himself "... count of Guise and Pardiac, baron of Lunel and lord of Leuze and Condé¹⁵." By this time he was already a captain of forty lances¹⁶. By his own admission, and that of Charles VIII, Louis was "... continually about the person of the King¹⁷." In 1496 he called himself a royal councillor and chamberlain¹⁸ and the next year Armagnac enjoyed a pension of 6000 livres¹⁹. It was during Charles VIII's Neapolitan expedition that Louis established his reputation as a soldier. Advancing south with the King he was conspicuous at the head of the procession in which Charles entered Florence²⁰. Later he led an advance

13. See Samaran, La maison d'Armagnac au XVe siècle, for Jean, Louis and the Armagnac inheritance.

14. Matton, Histoire de Guise, vol.1, pp. 291-3.

15. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 389.

16. He was a captain of the Ordonnance by 1492, B.N., fr. 25782, no. 114.

17. B.N., p.o. 95, nos. 389-90 and fr. 16589, fol. 183.

18. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 393.

19. Ibid., no. 394.

20. B.N., n.a.fr. 7644, fol. 67.

guard of companies into the Kingdom of Naples, taking Roccasecca, Rocca-Guglielma and the great fortress of San Germano - without encountering much resistance - before being one of the first to break into Castel Nuovo in the capital itself in March 1495²¹. Soon afterwards we find Armagnac operating on the other side of the kingdom, in the Otranto area²². He returned north with Charles, holding joint-command of the rearguard at Fornovo²³, and finally struggled into Asti with the exhausted army. At Vercelli, in October 1495, Louis emerges again, as one of four princes who carried a canopy of cloth-of-gold over the coffin of the late Count of Vendôme, at his funeral in the church of San Eusabio²⁴.

It is during the Neapolitan campaign that the first signs of ambition for high command appear. Before the battle of Fornovo, as the army's dispositions were being made, Louis fell into dispute with Jean de Foix-Narbonne over the leadership of the vanguard; since he had held command of the van previously during the campaign, Armagnac was unwilling to be excluded at the climax of the

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21. Lettres de Charles VIII, ed. Pélicier and Mandrot, vol. iv, p. 170; La Vigne, Le vergier d'honneur, in Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France, ed. Cimber and Canjou, ser. I, vol. i, p. 330; Commynes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. ii, p. 483; Delaborde, L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie, p. 561.
 22. La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, pp. 216-17.
 23. La Vigne, op.cit., p. 383; Bouchet, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 426.
 24. La Vigne, op.cit., p. 424.

expedition²⁵. Some years later, in 1499 or 1500, a correspondent observed that "Monsieur de Guise (Armagnac) had hotly solicited the King for the government of Florence... without the King having granted it to him...²⁶." This appetite for power would have to wait a while before it could be satisfied. In the meantime, Armagnac attended upon the new King, Louis XII, with as much dedication as in the past he had upon his predecessor, and he took part in the campaign for Lombardy in 1499²⁷.

The new century brought Louis d'Armagnac's career to its peak. In 1500 his brother Jean died, without an heir, and Louis became Duke of Nemours. In February the next year he styled himself, rather ambitiously, "... duke of Nemours, count of Armagnac, Guise, Pardiac, and L'Isle Jourdain, viscount of Châtellerault and Martigue, peer of France²⁸." Next month Louis was betrothed to Françoise d'Alençon, daughter of the Count of Perche²⁹. Later in the year he did homage, in his own name and that of his 'wife', for all his lands; the King

25. Commynes, op.cit., p. 526; B.N., fr. 17519, fol.174 vo..

26. L-G. Pélissier, Lettres inédites sur la conquête du Milanais (Turin, 1893), p. 11. Florence had applied for the protection of Louis XII.

27. Pélissier, Louis XII et Ludovic Sforza, vol.i, pp. 503-4. Armagnac accompanied the King in his entry into Milan, Auton, vol. i, pp. 99 and 105.

28. B.N., p.o. 95, no. 400. Louis was neither count of Armagnac nor Pardiac but simply held pretensions to these counties.

29. B.N., Clair. 534, p. 589; Titres de Bourbon, no. 7525. The bride was promised a dowry of 80,000 livres by her family whilst Louis guaranteed an annual rent of 5000 livres for her.

to wrote/his accountants ordering prompt expedition of the appropriate letters-patent, advising them that "he wanted Armagnac favourably treated, for he deserved as much as anyone else in the realm³⁰." By this time Armagnac was a Marshal of France and had already been appointed "chief lieutenant and governor" of the army for the conquest of Naples, although he had not yet taken up the post³¹. The army of invasion had left Parma at the beginning of June 1501, under the command of Beraud Stuart d'Aubigny and the Count of Caiazzo. Progress was swift and it was on the 30th. of July that Louis XII received at Lyons the news of the fall of Capua, the major impediment on the road to Naples. Not long after the flames of the celebratory bonfires had died away, Louis d'Armagnac, duc de Nemours, Viceroy of Naples, was on his way south. He travelled by boat down the Rhône to Marseilles, accompanied by a host of lords and gentlemen of the royal household; from here it was a short trip to Genoa, and

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30. B.N., fr. 10238, fol. 84. Whether Louis d'Armagnac ever did marry Françoise d'Alençon, or simply remained betrothed, is not clear. At all events Louis can have seen very little, if anything, of her and they certainly had no offspring who survived.
31. "Pouvoir à Monseigneur de Nemours pour la conquête de Naples", B.N., fr. 5501, fols. 97 vo. -102; this document is not dated but the appointment must have run from early summer 1501. By the 6th of June at the latest he was commander-in-chief, according to Venetian information, *Diarii*, vol. iv, cols. 58-9. Armagnac is not called 'Viceroy' in the commission but by 1502 is known as such.

thence to Naples, where Armagnac arrived on the 12th of October 1501³².

At first sight the arrival of the Viceroy must have seemed to consummate success. The Treaty of Granada, agreed almost a year before, had, by assuring the King of Aragon of Calabria and Apulia, surely precluded the menace of Spanish opposition to French rule in Naples³³, opposition which had proved fatal in 1495-6. The advance of Aubigny's army had been as trouble-free as that of Charles VIII's before him. The former King of Naples, Federigo, had been dispatched to France. As Louis d'Armagnac enjoyed his public welcome, with its official feasts of celebration³⁴, secure in the knowledge that his commission gave him supreme authority in the conduct of operations, "... as if we ourselves (Louis XII)... were there in person³⁵," can he not have been elated at so

32. Auton, ii, pp. 28, 66, 94-6 and n.1. The King wrote to the Chambre des Comptes on the 8th of August, telling of the surrender of the castles of Naples and Gaeta, B.N., fr. 10238, fol. 173; a letter of the 29th of July, from outside Naples, had informed him of this event (which took place on the 27th.), B.N., n.a.fr. 7645, fol. 393 - testimony to the speed with which good news reached Louis XII.

33. This treaty, ratified at Granada on the 11th of November 1500 - though kept secret until the following summer - allotted to France Naples, Gaeta, the Abruzzi and Terra di Lavoro, to Aragon Apulia and Calabria, Bridge, A history of France, iii, p. 150.

34. Auton, vol. ii, p. 97.

35. B.N., fr. 5501, fol. 101.

favourable a realisation of his ambitions?

Problems were not slow to arise, however. On the one hand, since the time of Aubigny's arrival in Naples an epidemic of 'plague' had been raging in the city. Amongst others it killed Caiazzo, Etienne de Vesc, seneschal of Beaucaire, and the Duke of Montpensier³⁶. In the Neapolitan budget of 1502, 6000 ducats were set aside to help the people of Naples meet the costs of the scourge³⁷. Armagnac seems to have escaped serious illness but Aubigny was not so lucky, though he survived³⁸. The second major problem was the hostility with which the new chief was greeted by this same man, Aubigny, who did not anticipate with pleasure the thought of taking orders from a man half his age, especially after Aubigny himself had effected the conquest of the realm. He retired to his

36. Boislisle, Notice sur Etienne de Vesc, p. 213.

37. B.N., fr. 2930, fol. 18. Was this 'plague' the same thing as Jean d'Auton's "grosse verolle" or "maladye de Naples" (syphilis) which was rampant at the time, according to the chronicler, carrying off several important people, and which could sometimes be cured by hot baths and sweating, Auton, ii, p. 107? Later Auton refers to the deaths of a number of distinguished men in Naples, round about September 1501, including Caiazzo and Jean de St. Prest; he does not specify the cause of death, although his editor, de Maulde, notes that the summer of 1501 was particularly hot, in both Naples and France, causing widespread mortality, ibid., p. 138 and n.1. A brief discussion of the origins of syphilis in Europe can be found in Bridge, op.cit., ii, pp. 231-2.

38. Auton, ii, pp. 72-3.

county of Venafrò and asked the King if he might be allowed to return to France. His request was refused. Jean d'Auton saw this dispute as the beginning of those divisions in the French command which were to debilitate the war-effort of the following years³⁹. Cardinal Georges d'Amboise, Louis XII's first minister, seems to have foreseen some danger in Armagnac's appointment as Viceroy. In a letter to the King of early August 1501, following Nemours' promotion, he warned against a hasty appointment: "it is necessary to have (in Naples) a chief with good sense and a willingness to serve, a man whom all who remain there, gendarmes or others, will fear and respect, who will be obeyed and who will think of nothing but his honour and duty to yourself... At all events, Sire, consider the matter well and wisely, until such time as you may have thought otherwise of the Count of Caiazzo and my lord of Aubigny...⁴⁰." If this is an admonition against Armagnac's elevation, as seems likely, it is evident that in this affair at least the Cardinal was overruled by the King.

However, the main source of concern for the French soon came to be the troubling proximity of the Spaniards in southern Italy. At first this appears as a minor worry. The memorandum which was probably drafted towards the end of 1501, containing recommendations on the

39. Ibid., pp. 97-8.

40. B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 9.

formalisation of French rule, is concerned primarily with the establishment of an administration, the foundation of judicial procedures, the resurrection of Neapolitan finances, the propitiation of local feelings and the settlement of proprietary disputes amongst members of the Neapolitan aristocracy. Only a brief mention is made in the document of the need to appoint representatives to treat with the Spaniards, to ensure that the two Kings had received equal shares of the partitioned realm.⁴¹ There seems to be little doubt that Louis XII concluded the Treaty of Granada in good faith. Although the editor of Jean d'Auton's chronicles contends that the commission of Armagnac gives no hint that the whole realm of Naples does not belong to the French Crown⁴², on the contrary, in this very document Louis XII qualifies himself "King of Naples", rather than adhering to the old pretension of "King of Sicily"⁴³. Besides, the loan of French troops to Gonzalo de Córdoba, the Spanish commander, to help him complete his conquest of Calabria and Apulia, testifies to the French

41. "Mémoire de ce quil semble qui est très necessaire et où le Roy entre autres chozes doit promptement pourvoir pour le bien de son Royaulme de Naples," B.N., fr. 3087, fols. 176-7 (published in Auton, vol. ii, pièces annexes, pp. 395-7).

42. Ibid., ii, p. 93, n.2.

43. B.N., fr. 5501, fol. 97 vo..

desire to maintain good relations with their partner⁴⁴. It was the growing suspicion - right or wrong - that the latter had had the better of the bargain which began to undermine French faith in the compact. A letter to Louis XII of late July 1501 informed him that the whole of the French sector of the Kingdom of Naples had been taken into control, "... which was very little⁴⁵." A memorandum, which appears to date from this period before the outbreak of war with Gonzalo, asserts that the Spanish-held territories produce some 50 to 70,000 ducats' more revenue than the French. At the same time, the Principate, Capitanate and Basilicate, lands not explicitly assigned to either party by the terms of the Treaty of Granada and by 1502 the areas of issue between the two sides, are calculated to be together worth 160 to 180,000 ducats, besides being full of noble families⁴⁶. Here we can detect the seeds of the subsequent conflict.

In the winter of 1501-2 however, other matters called for attention. The French set about organising Louis XII's new kingdom, which he was destined never to see. They were especially intent on avoiding the follies which had attended Charles VIII's occupation. The instructions

44. Auton, ii, p. 249; Giovio, Le vite del Gran Capitano e del Marchese di Pescara, publ. by Panigada, p. 66.

45. B.N., n.a.fr. 7645, fol. 393.

46. "Mémoire... sur le Royaume de Sicile 'citra farum'", B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 27 and 26 vo..

which Louis XII had handed to his emissary, Edouard Bullion, on the 8th. of August 1501, to deliver to his lieutenants in Naples, illustrate the overriding aims of economy and moderation. All the artillery was to be safely installed in the castles of Naples and Gaeta; the Swiss, some of the French foot and the pioneer and supply corps were to be paid off, though the gendarmerie was to remain strictly in place⁴⁷. The need to husband resources and conciliate the local population is also stressed in the administrative memorandum noted above⁴⁸. Charles' conquest had been seriously compromised by the dissipation of military and other stores, the lack of money and the growth of hostility amongst the natives. Only the most obvious cause of his predecessor's failure, the intervention of a Spanish army, was not covered by Louis XII's careful planning. A budget for the year 1502 was drawn up⁴⁹. The anticipated revenue of some 571,000 livres tournois could be expected to be supplemented by 95,000 livres owed by the city of Naples, as well as a few other incidental revenues, such as the tax on Jews which normally produced 7000 ducats. These funds would be used for the upkeep

47. Boislisle, op.cit., pp. 207-8.

48. B.N., fr. 3087, fol. 176.

49. "Estat général fait de la valleur et revenu des finances au Royaume de Napples...", B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 13-19.

of 530 French lances and fifty Italian ones in French service⁵⁰, 1800 footsoldiers, some artillerymen, two galleys and two brigantines, the repairs to various fortresses, a host of salaries and pensions, and some other small expenses. Both Armagnac and Aubigny were to receive 12,000 livres for their respective posts of Viceroy and Constable. In addition, whilst Aubigny enjoyed the county of Venafro, Nemours was assigned a further 3500 livres on the duchy of Nola. Both men also enjoyed gratuities on the French finances, amounting to 5000 livres in Armagnac's case in this year 1502⁵¹. The other officers of the realm were paid in the same way, according to their seniority⁵², and pro rata payment was to be made for 1501, according to the length of service in Naples during the previous year. Lastly, it was urged that captains of castles charged with stores be obliged to promise to render as equivalent consignment when called

50. The cavalry force in Naples was always a good deal larger than this, other troops being the charge of the French or Milanese treasuries. Armagnac's company was supported by one of the latter but the Viceroy inherited command of the 50 lance unit of St. Prest - one of those assigned to Naples - following this man's death in September 1501, B.N., Clair. 240, no. 553.

51. B.N., p.o. 95, nos. 397 and 407.

52. Salaries ranged from 4000 livres for Raoul de Lannoy, grand chamberlain of Naples, to 30 each for the four janitors of the Chambre des Comptes of Naples.

upon to do so, and anyway to ensure that supplies were never less than two-thirds below strength. Still Louis XII was haunted by the débâcle of his predecessor's defeat.

In composing their budget the French must have again been struck by the defects of the Treaty of Granada. The terms of partition had not rendered definitive judgment on the status of three areas which had at different times in the past variously depended upon both French and Spanish-held provinces for administrative purposes. The difficulty might have proved less serious than it became had the contentious territories been insignificant appendages, but the Capitanate in particular, lying between the Ofanto and Fortore rivers and the equivalent of the modern province of Foggia, was a land of great value as a source of grain and of revenue from the traditional sheep-tax⁵³. Proof that the Capitanate became the principal point of issue between the two sides can be found in the clauses of the treaty drafted by Louis XII and the Archduke Philip of Austria, acting for the Catholic Kings, in early 1503, by which a settlement of the conflict in southern Italy was to be arranged. Here it is clearly stated that the war began as a result of the dubious status of this province, and the terms of the accord concentrate almost exclusively on

53. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, publ. by Panigada, vol. ii, pp. 33-4; Bridge, *op.cit.*, iii, pp. 150-1.

the future of the Capitanate⁵⁴. French infiltration into the disputed lands, and into Apulia and Calabria proper, seems to have begun even before Armagnac's arrival in Naples; since these territories incorporated many estates belonging to Neapolitan nobles of pro-French, or Angevin, sympathies, neither they nor their French patrons could tolerate Spanish control⁵⁵. The initial suspicion of the Treaty of Granada on the part of French captains was reinforced by increasing evidence that in practice the division of the realm was unworkable. Both sides attempted to extend their occupation wherever possible; the French were the more successful because the main Spanish army was tied down in a long siege of Taranto - which only fell on the 1st. of March 1502 - because their forces were the more numerous in any case, and because they enjoyed greater local support⁵⁶. In such circumstances Gonzalo de Córdoba could only hope to try to delay his party's extinction by suggesting negotiation. The French captains, under the leadership of Aubigny until Armagnac's arrival, were willing to accommodate Córdoba, for they had no real directives from France and hence no consistent

54. B.N., fr. 2930, fols. 3-6 and supplement to treaty, ibid., fols. 7-8 vo..

55. Lojendio, Gonzalo de Córdoba, pp. 169-70.

56. Guicciardini notes the favour enjoyed by the French in both Apulia and Calabria, op.cit., pp. 26-7.

policy to pursue. In short, both sides, and especially the French, fumbled for a course of action, left to their own initiative as they were by the policy-makers at home, who were of course weeks away by post and anyway ignorant of the problems which had developed from their mutual compact.

When Louis d'Armagnac assumed the government of Naples, he was no better able to regulate a dispute which was perilously close to open warfare, despite his possession of supreme authority in matters both military and diplomatic, and of Louis XII's sworn word to support all his Viceroy's decisions concerning the conquest of Naples. As he discussed the dispute with the Spanish representative, Juan Claver, violations of the Treaty of Granada persisted, perhaps the most notorious being the advance of Louis d'Ars into Apulia⁵⁷. Ars was lieutenant of the company of Louis de Ligny and he did not scruple to use his band in the reconquest of the Apulian inheritance which Ligny claimed by right of his late wife, the Duchess of Altamura. A meeting between Nemours and Córdoba was arranged however. It took place on the 4th. of April 1502 at the monastery of San Antonio, between Melfi and Atella. This interview secured a truce, but

57. Lojendio, op.cit., pp. 177-8.

despite being only the first of a series of diplomatic exchanges no lasting peace was obtained⁵⁸. The two chiefs were simply not competent to negotiate a political settlement, just as Aubigny and Córdoba had felt unable to clarify the terms of the Treaty of Granada in 1501. The matter had to be remitted to the respective sovereigns and they, feeling almost equally incompetent to issue firm orders from a distance, passed the burden of responsibility back to their lieutenants. Giovio's claim that of all the main protagonists only Gonzalo really wanted peace⁵⁹ cannot be sustained; Ferdinand of Aragon for one was most anxious to avoid hostilities, as the weaker power⁶⁰. The French on the other hand would hardly have consented to months of talks at San Antonio if they had only desired war. Against a backdrop of violent incidents, at Atripalda and Avellino in the Principate, at Troia in the Capitanate, and elsewhere in Apulia⁶¹, the issue was forced, in the absence of firm policy at the centre, by local rivalry between French and Spanish garrisons. Full-scale warfare threatened to break out by default. In these circumstances Armagnac was in

58. Ibid., pp. 179-82; Giovio, op.cit., p. 76.

59. Ibid., pp. 76-7.

60. Lojendio, op.cit., p. 176.

61. Ibid., pp. 180-1; Auton, ii, pp. 253-70.

an unenviable position. Bridge's contention that he "... desired nothing so eagerly as an immediate rupture" seems unlikely⁶². However, in view of the prevailing conditions, Armagnac, encouraged by Louis XII, determined to take the offensive. Issuing an ultimatum for the sake of form, which was naturally defied by his adversary, Nemours advanced into the Capitanate⁶³.

With his superiority of forces the Viceroy made good progress. Now that tenacious attempts at negotiation could no longer shield his military weakness, Gonzalo de Córdoba withdrew the bulk of his army into the seaport of Barletta, in Apulia. He reached the town on the 10th. of July 1502 and having installed smaller garrisons in Cerignola, Canosa and Andria, to form an outer defensive ring, he determined to hold out until he could be reinforced. The decision was bold - the Colonna brothers, who served under Gonzalo, as well as Ferdinand himself, had no liking for the strategy⁶⁴. Their fears must have been increased

62. Bridge, op.cit., iii, p. 151. Bridge seems to base his claim on the testimony of Guicciardini, who calls Armagnac "proud" or "puffed up", op.cit., p. 35. The Italian is not however a reliable witness to the Viceroy's character - for instance, he later confuses the traditional roles of Armagnac and Yves d'Alègre at Cerignola, making the former the aggressive and the latter the cautious protagonoist, ibid., p. 80. Lojendio notes that Armagnac seemed anxious for an accord with the Spaniards, op.cit., p. 181.

63. Although Jean d'Auton naturally blames the Spaniards for initiating the violence and accuses Córdoba of obstinacy in negotiation, he does nonetheless admit that Armagnac made the declaration of war, Auton, ii, pp. 253, 256 and 274-5. The sequence and dating of events leading up to the outbreak of war are not easy to establish precisely, although the last exchange at San Antonio took place on 22nd. of June, Lojendio, loc.cit..

64. ibid., p. 187.

when the French army began to close in. Cerignola, held by a small contingent, fell quickly, the garrison escaping to Canosa⁶⁵. Indeed the whole of the Capitanate, except for Manfredonia and Monte San Angelo, was overrun⁶⁶.

The rather more substantial defensive position of Canosa was Armagnac's next objective. Here the French had more work to do, but the place surrendered on terms in late August, after a stern siege; again the remnant of the garrison was able to evacuate the town and reply on Barletta⁶⁷. About this time too, Minervino, Corato and Bisceglie fell to Louis d'Ars, as towns of the Altamura inheritance⁶⁸.

The strategy of the Viceroy before Barletta has been severely criticised by modern authorities⁶⁹. The failure to assault the place, or at least to invest it tightly, was an error which ultimately cost Louis XII a kingdom. It is however rather more easy to appreciate

65. Auton, ii, pp. 280-2.

66. Guicciardini, op.cit., p. 47.

67. Auton, pp. 283-92; Don M. de los Heros, Historia del Conde Pedro Navarro, in Coleccion de documentos inéditos para la historia de España, vol. xxv (1854), pp. 45-8.

68. Auton, vol. iii, pp. 1-9.

69. Bridge condemns his strategy, op.cit., iii, pp. 152-4 and 157-9; de Maulde thinks him rather weak and foolish, suggesting that Jean d'Auton's praise of the Viceroy's qualities merely follows the bland official view of the time, Auton, ii, pp. 92, n.1.

Armagnac's difficulties than to recommend the plan of campaign which he ought to have adopted. We are told of differences of opinion at command level: Aubigny would have preferred to besiege Barletta, according to Guicciardini; La Palice as well, according to Giovio⁷⁰. Armagnac evidently felt that the port was too strong to be attacked and its vicinity too waterless for close investment, so he settled for encirclement at a distance. His plan is explained in a letter from Raoul de Lannoy, grand chamberlain of Naples, to Cardinal d'Amboise, written from Canosa on the 23rd. of August, 1502⁷¹. After due consultation with his principal captains, such as Aubigny, La Palice and Yves d'Alègre, the Viceroy decided he would occupy all the towns of the Barletta area, so as to prevent the enemy breaking out towards Taranto, which was still in Spanish hands; he was hopeful of taking them all, except

70. Guicciardini, op.cit., p. 47; Giovio, op.cit., p. 79.

71. B.N., Dupuy 261, fol. 138. There has been some confusion over the dates of the siege and fall of Canosa. Bridge places events in July, a month too early, op.cit., iii, p. 154. Los Heros suggests a nine-day siege of Canosa from the 15th. to the 24th. of August, op.cit., pp. 45-8. Lannoy's letter of the 23rd. clearly shows however that the place was in French hands by this date, and it seems best to conclude that the siege did indeed begin on the 15th but lasted only about four days, Lojendio, op.cit., pp. 189-90 and Auton, ii, p. 284. For his part Bridge goes wrong in following Jean d'Auton's chronology which assumes a rapid closing in on Barletta; on the contrary Armagnac's campaign was hesitant from the start, Pieri, Il Rinascimento e la crisi militare italiana, p. 401.

Andria with its powerful garrison. There is in the letter no indication that Nemours' subordinates disapproved of this policy, which in effect aimed to starve Córdoba out of Barletta whilst hoping that its citizens would turn against him as living conditions deteriorated. The main difficulty in tackling the Spanish stronghold was a lack of artillery, for any impression made on the walls would be quickly repaired. The Viceroy was sending for two more guns and extra ammunition.⁷² In view of the problem which Canosa had posed to the French, we may well understand Armagnac's reluctance to attack the much more powerful Barletta. Besides, the Swiss, some two thousand of whom joined the army sometime after the fall of Canosa⁷³, were notoriously impatient of siege-work. Finally, until the French could establish naval superiority in the Adriatic any siege of Barletta would be unlikely to succeed - the main reason for Gonzalo's decision to retire to Barletta at all was afforded by Juan de Lezcano's squadron, which controlled the south Adriatic⁷⁴. The survivors of the siege of Canosa were dispatched by sea to reinforce Taranto⁷⁵; the

72. At the start of the campaign the French had had twenty-six guns, but they were mainly small pieces, Auton, ii, p. 278.

73. Most sources agree that something between 1500 and 3000 Swiss troops joined Armagnac after the fall of Canosa. Guicciardini places their arrival before this event, however, op.cit., p. 47. According to Pieri, by the spring of 1503 the French had 3500 Swiss in Apulia and 1500 in Calabria, op.cit., p. 406. Perhaps some Swiss forces had remained with the French in Naples in 1501, despite Louis XII's order for their dismissal; certainly it seems that some Swiss or German soldiers were involved in the siege of Canosa, Auton, ii, pp. 288 and Los Heros, op.cit., p. 45.

74. Lojendio, op.cit., p. 188.

75. Auton, ii, p. 293.

attack on Bisceglie had been hindered by three Spanish galleys⁷⁶. In the autumn of 1502, the arrival of a French squadron under the captain-general of the royal galleys, the Gascon, Prégent de Bidoux, helped redress the balance at sea, but the French were never able to prevent all attempts to resupply Barletta⁷⁷.

In addition Gonzalo could rely upon the friendship of Bari, whose duchess, Isabella, was an Aragonese partisan. Furthermore a number of Apulian ports - Trani, Mola di Bari, Polignano, Monopoli, Brindisi and Otranto - were held by the Venetians, as a legacy of the League of Venice of 1495 and the subsequent role of the Republic in the expulsion of the French from the Regno. The governors of these ports tried hard to maintain a decent neutrality, under pressure from both sides to favour their respective parties. Indeed, as early as September Armagnac was writing to complain of the support which he felt the Governor of Trani lent to Córdoba's cause. Nonetheless, the tone of his letter was otherwise optimistic: when five galleys from Naples had joined the four which Prégent de Bidoux commanded, Armagnac would invest Barletta; meanwhile in Calabria the French cause had found powerful native allies⁷⁸. The Governor of Mola wrote at the end of September that the affairs of the King of France were

76. Ibid., iii, pp. 5-6.

77. C.F. Duro, Armada española, vol. i, p. 38.

78. Diarii, vol. iv, col. 339.

prospering: Gonzalo held Barletta with 4 or 5000 men, but most of the other places of Apulia had raised the French flag⁷⁹. Besides, as the Governor of Monopoli reported in early October, the French enjoyed wider popular support than their enemy; "... it was the general opinion that the Spaniards would be expelled from the Kingdom, even if they were reinforced, because they were disliked for their insolence and even alienated their best friends, who were now disposed to favour the French as the lesser of two evils."⁸⁰

During these autumn months Armagnac, with the main field army, reduced most of Apulia and the Otranto district to obedience⁸¹. Yet the problem posed by insufficient naval forces had not been overcome. On the 22nd. of October 1502 the Viceroy wrote to the French ambassadors in Rome, explaining his recent campaign. "My lords", he began,

"I am writing by this same post to the King, telling of my return from the Otranto area, which I have put into his sway, apart from Taranto and Gallipoli, which are encircled by the sea. And so as not to waste time before these two places, since I did not have the fleet with me but had sent it to cruise off the Calabrian coast, I have done no more than have a look at them. I also write of my coming to the Bari area, where more towns submitted upon my arrival."

Nemours went on to tell of the bloodless surrender of Bitonto. He aimed soon to take Molfetta, Giovinazzo and the strong Bari. He would then approach Barletta, "...

79. Ibid., col. 341. This optimistic picture is echoed in letters from Naples, ibid., col. 359.

80. Ibid., col. 372.

81. Ibid., cols. 372 and 391.

"... in which Gonzalo was in dire need of help", in order to "... do as much harm to him as possible by land and sea, since he (Armagnac) now had Prégent's galleys with him." He had written to Monsieur de la Lande to come back from Calabria and join his squadron to Prégent's, and had also ordered two large sailing ships to make for Apulia. All Calabria but a few coastal places was now in French hands and, in short, Armagnac was so confident that he even thought the arrival of Spanish reinforcements would benefit his enemy little⁸². Already however we can detect a warning in the Viceroy's own account of matters. If Taranto and Gallipoli could not be taken, through want of naval support, could the French be any more sure of squeezing Gonzalo out of Barletta, which maintained a squadron of its own⁸³?

It was surely the lack of adequate naval resources which more than anything explains Louis d'Armagnac's failure to place a siege before Barletta. The French disposed of two squadrons in the south of Italy. The first, a handful of galleys under Prégent de Bidoux, began operations off the Apulian coast sometime in September 1502, immediately after its return from co-operating, as an agent of the knights of Rhodes, in the Venetian capture of the Turkish

82. Ibid., cols. 421-2. In fact Armagnac had done a little more than just look at Taranto and Gallipoli, ibid., col. 391 and Los Heros, op.cit., pp. 52-5. Unfortunately, almost nothing of the Viceroy's correspondence seems to have survived, with only a few notifications or transcriptions of letters in Sanuto's diaries.

83. Taranto also had a covering squadron of three barze, according to a Venetian source, Diarii, loc.cit..

fort of Santa Maura in the Ionian islands. The second, a larger force, was equipped at Genoa, put under the command of Louis de Bigars, seigneur de la Lande, and dispatched in two stages, the first squadron reaching Naples in early August⁸⁴. Modern authorities suggest that La Lande (who had arrived with the first detachment, of five former Neapolitan galleys) never actually joined forces with Prégent, as was the intention of Nemours, who envisaged a combined operation against Barletta, in support of a proposed landward investment. Setting out from Naples in late September, La Lande was unable to pass the Straits of Messina, blocked by superior enemy forces⁸⁵. La Lande may never have rounded the toe of Italy at all, although Armagnac's letter, copied in Sanuto's diaries, implies that his squadron was with the Viceroy at some stage but was then sent to patrol the Calabrian coast, before being ordered back to help in the projected operation at Barletta. At all events La Lande never reached Apulia. The reasons for this costly failure are not easy to establish. La Lande may have been incompetent and also ill-served by his Neapolitan galley captains⁸⁶. Perhaps more important was the lateness of the

84. C. de la Roncière, *Histoire de la marine française*, vol. iii (Paris, 1923), pp. 56-7 and 61-2; A. Spont, "Les galères royales dans la Méditerranée de 1496 à 1518", in *Revue des Questions Historiques*, vol. lvi (1895), pp. 391-429; p. 401.

85. La Roncière, *op.cit.*, p. 62 and Spont, *loc. cit.*.

86. La Roncière, *loc.cit.*.

season, which made a voyage from Naples to Apulia a hazardous prospect⁸⁷. Whatever the reasons, Prégent de Bidoux was left to operate alone in the Adriatic during the winter of 1502-3, despite the ever-present intention to have his squadron reinforced⁸⁸.

In the circumstances, Nemours could only persist with a rather flaccid and ineffectual blockade of Barletta, raiding at sea and mounting guard on land. The seaport was enclosed as far as possible by small garrisons, at Lucera and Foggia, Troia and Cerignola, Minervino, Venosa, Spinazzola, Ruva, Terlizzi and Bitonto⁸⁹. Meanwhile in Calabria, warfare between Angevin partisans, with French support, and Spanish contingents, periodically strengthened by fresh troops from Sicily and the homeland, provided a second campaign theatre. Late in 1502 Aubigny was sent into the province, in the face of enemy advances, and he

87. Spont adduces bad weather as the cause of La Lande's failure to join Prégent in late September, op.cit., p. 401. On the 13th. of November it was reported from Naples that the galleys could not leave port owing to weather conditions, Diarii, iv, col. 483. The previous month Edouard Bullion had complained that the papal envoy in Naples had been bribing crews to desert, ibid., col. 423. It was on the 13th of November that the second stage of the Genoese force arrived at Naples, but again bad weather, lack of funds and the enemy's control of the Straits of Messina effectively marooned it here, Spont, loc.cit..
88. Prégent himself lay at Brindisi continuously from the end of November until almost the middle of January, Ibid., p. 402.
89. List of French garrisons in place on the 20th. of November 1502, Diarii, iv, cols. 526-9. Jean d'Auton names the main garrisons in January 1503 as Ruvo, Corato and Terlizzi, Auton, iii, pp. 105. and 109.

quickly secured a reversal of fortunes⁹⁰. Apulia, however, was the more important arena, where the rival commanders-in-chief opposed one another with the bulk of their respective forces. During the winter this Apulian campaign degenerated into a guerrilla war. The Spaniards still occupied the main strongpoints of the region, Barletta and Andria, Bari, Taranto and Gallipoli, to name the most important, and Armagnac was unable to dislodge them without help from France. The French offensive had reached its natural limits. The cavalry skirmishes in the Apulian plain which at this time passed for warfare only undermined Armagnac's position further. The French, whose advantage lay in their mastery of mass cavalry tactics in open combat, were not particularly well equipped for this sort of fighting, characterised as it was by the hit-and-run raid and the ambush. Spanish cavalry on the other hand had known little else but this type of warfare for centuries and had been recently re-educated in it in the Granadan war⁹¹. The French found their enemy slippery and Gonzalo de Córdoba's manner of waging war devious. The campaign was fought in an ever worsening context of dearth, penury

90. Ibid., pp. 13-14 and 97-9; Diarii, col. 541.

91. Lojendio, op.cit., pp. 193-4. Their defeat at the first battle of Seminara in 1495 had convinced the Spaniards of the folly of exposing their horse to attack by French cavalry in the open field.

and native disaffection. The Venetian envoy in Naples wrote on the 10th. of December that "the realm was being devastated and business had come to a halt; scarcity, oppression and extortion were the rule and everyone feared the worst; and for two months the weather had been foully wet and only grew worse, despite daily intercessions⁹²." The small towns which the French held with their scattered forces grew more and more weary of their oppressors, and anxious to expel them. The most serious incident occurred at Castellaneta, near Taranto, where the company of Aymar de Prie, under its lieutenant, Louis de St. Bonnet, was stationed. This unit was driven to extort its livelihood from the inhabitants, owing to lack of pay; on the 12th. of February 1503 the citizens seized St. Bonnet and his men, with Spanish help from Taranto, after many fruitless appeals to the Viceroy for redress of their grievances, and the gendarmes were imprisoned⁹³. This revolt was just one of a number in that part of the country during the new year⁹⁴. By March 1503 the citizens of Naples itself were restless. The French wished to disarm the civil population, presumably in fear for their own safety, and the inhabitants resented

92. Diarii, col. 557.

93. Ibid., cols. 772, 778 and 783; Auton, iii, p. 137.

94. Diarii, col. 801.

the move⁹⁵. Increasingly the French suffered from this type of insolence and rebellion, as the local population grew confident of Spanish victory and the French themselves lent ever more heavily on the natives in their attempts to raise funds.

All the work of 1502 was in danger of being undone in this winter stalemate. Armagnac could well lose Naples unless he were reinforced, on sea and land. At sea Prégent de Bidoux, operating from the Apulian ports - both French and Venetian - did much to disrupt Barletta's supplies⁹⁶. During the winter, conditions here were desperate at times. Owing to lack of pay, Gonzalo had to placate mutinous troops with promises⁹⁷. According to Jean d'Auton, the Spaniards in Barletta "... knew not to which saint to appeal for help," such was their plight⁹⁸.

95. Ibid., col. 851.

96. On the 12th. of November 1502 the Governor of Monopoli reported that Prégent had sent a fusta to that port to be landed for repairs, and also two galleys to have their rudders fixed, ibid., cols. 476-7. Prégent's presence in their harbours angered the Venetians - in December the Governor of Brindisi complained that no ship would enter port with the Gascon berthed there, ibid., col. 629.

97. Lojendio, op.cit., p. 203. Gonzalo's whole campaign was plagued by financial trouble, causing more than one mutiny amongst his men, ibid., pp. 165 and 171. The administrative development of the Spanish army at this time is discussed by P. Stewart in "The soldier, the bureaucrat and fiscal records in the army of Ferdinand and Isabella," in Hispanic-American Historical Review, no. xlix (1969), pp. 281-92.

98. Auton, iii, p. 110.

Prégent's depredations were causing hardship but were not sufficient to bring Barletta to terms. By various means, Córdoba kept himself supplied, to some degree. In the autumn of 1502, for instance, a Genoese merchantman returning from Alexandria had been captured by Spanish craft off Sicily and taken to Barletta, where its cargo of 80,000 ducats worth of specie must have eased Gonzalo's financial problems⁹⁹. But it was not enough. Soon the Spanish commander was calling upon the Viceroy in Sicily to send grain supplies and one full year's pay for his troops¹⁰⁰. Meanwhile Gonzalo fed his garrison by expropriating Venetian cargoes, rustling sheep and getting some stores from Sicily as well¹⁰¹. Barletta had at her disposal the small galley squadron of Lezcagno, about the same size as Prégent's force. Around the turn of January and February 1503, Lezcagno sailed south to try and ensure the safe passage of Sicilian supplies in the Gulf of Taranto and Straits of Otranto, where Prégent was cruising¹⁰². On the 10th. of February the four French galleys, with their auxilliary craft and two prizes, put into Otranto. On the 16th. Lezcagno appeared and demanded permission to enter port to take back Prégent's prizes. Although the Venetian

99. Diarii, iv, cols. 389 and 430.

100. Ibid., col. 627.

101. Ibid., cols. 728-9, 763-5, 771 and 772.

102. Ibid., cols. 530, 752, 765, 771, 778 and 802.

governor refused, the Spaniard entered harbour on the 20th. and surprised the Gascon, who scuttled his ships, dismissed his convict crews and escaped overland¹⁰³.

At a stroke Armagnac's investment of Barletta was sabotaged. Supplies soon arrived from Sicily unhindered¹⁰⁴. Louis XII was incensed that the Venetians should have allowed such an outrageous violation of their own neutrality; at Mass one day he became so angry in the company of the Republic's ambassador that no-one could hear a word of the service¹⁰⁵.

The destruction of the royal galleys was all the more fateful in view of the dissipation of Armagnac's land forces. By the time that Gonzalo left Barletta in April 1503 he had captured seven hundred horses from the French, according to Giovio - mainly at Castellaneta and also Ruvo, where the La Palice and Savoy companies were forced to surrender after a siege at the end of February. In addition, the Spanish commander was unwilling to offer prisoners for ransom¹⁰⁶. Gonzalo realised that it was important to alter the balance of forces in his favour. As for reinforcements for himself, the most gratifying was a contingent of two thousand Germans, mainly pikemen, with

103. Ibid., cols. 802, 808 and 889; Duro, op.cit., pp. 38-9; Spont, op.cit., p. 402; Auton, vol. ii, pp. 202-4.

104. Diarii, col. 801 and Giovio, op.cit., p. 100.

105. Diarii, col. 849.

106. Giovio, op.cit., p. 103.

which Córdoba might oppose the Viceroy's Swiss. On the 17th of February these troops were embarked at Trieste, under the supervision of Octavio Colonna, who had been dispatched by Gonzalo to raise them¹⁰⁷. The Spaniard boasted that once he had obtained reinforcements from Spain and Colonna's Germans he would be in Naples within twenty days¹⁰⁸.

On the other side, Nemours was not provided with fresh troops. Since the Swiss arrivals from Genoa the summer before, French strength had waned as casualties mounted, more troops were diverted to Calabria and French partisans quit the cause through want of money. The last blow to the Viceroy's strength was delivered by diplomatic means, however. From the winter of 1502-3, rumours of a new accord between Louis XII and the Catholic Kings were picked up all over Europe. Ultimately, on the 5th of April 1503, a treaty was formalised at Lyons by Louis and the Archduke Philip of Austria, who purported to act for Spain, providing for a settlement of the Neapolitan war. Already the Swiss menace to Lombardy had caused the King of France to divert in that direction reinforcements intended for Naples¹⁰⁹. Now the treaty with Philip

107. Diarii, col. 746.

108. Ibid., col. 793. He failed to live up to his word since it took him over a month to reach Naples following the Germans' arrival. As for Spanish reinforcements they all disembarked in Calabria, despite Gonzalo's insistence that they be sent to Barletta, Pieri, op.cit., p. 404.

109. Diarii, col. 826.

effectively halted French military preparations¹¹⁰. But when Gonzalo de Córdoba was instructed to lay down his arms by the Archduke's representative he simply replied that he only took orders from his sovereign. It was thought at the time that Córdoba had a secret understanding with Ferdinand to refuse to comply with any truce¹¹¹, and indeed he had, having received instructions in late February not to agree to anything but his master's orders¹¹². Even if any reinforcement which Louis XII might have dispatched after the 5th of April may well not have reached Armagnac in time for the battle of Cerignola, the talk of truce had been going on for months in France and it seems that Louis XII was seduced from a full prosecution of the war in the south by the climate of negotiation and his hopes for peace. Certainly Nemours received no help.

After their defeat the French looked back with bitterness at the perfidy of Spain and the trickery of the Archduke¹¹³. It seems likely however that it was rather Maximilian, King of the Romans, who was the instigator of the deception. The first we hear of peace talks in Venetian diplomatic sources is of Maximilian's envoy in France claiming to act for the Catholic Kings. At the

110. Guicciardini, op.cit., pp. 75-6.

111. Auton, iii, p. 157.

112. Lojendio, op.cit., pp. 209-10.

113. B.N., fr. 26108, nos. 454 and 455; M. le Glay, Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche, D.I., vol. i (Paris, 1845), p. 191.

same time the King of the Romans was informing the Spaniards that he would supply Gonzalo with troops¹¹⁴. For their part the Catholic Kings and their representatives consistently denied that they were treating for peace with France, and they repudiated the claims of Maximilian's agents and of Philip to negotiate on their behalf¹¹⁵. When Gonzalo sent word to Germany that he would be in Naples within twenty days of the arrival of reinforcements, Maximilian's court received the prediction with delight¹¹⁶. The French ambassador at Venice knew that German troops were preparing to embark for Apulia at least as early as February the 13th.¹¹⁷ In short, it seems almost incredible that Louis XII retained faith in the validity of negotiations with Philip the Fair, in view of so much adverse evidence.

After the Spanish destruction of Ruvo on the 23rd. of February, both commanders-in-chief had regrouped their available forces. Gonzalo, soon to be bolstered by the Germans from Trieste, intended to deliver the fatal blow to his enemy in open combat, which until now he had striven so hard to avoid. Armagnac for his part expected a breakout from Barletta. On the 27th of April 1503 the Spanish army issued from the town which had sheltered it for nine months. Córdoba hoped to bring the French to battle by encamping on the defensible hillock beneath the small town of Cerignola, and thus threatening this French-held place.

114. Diarii, col. 663.

115. Ibid., cols. 663, 678, 692 and 709.

116. Ibid., col. 793.

117. Ibid., col. 728.

According to plan, the next day he set his army down hard by the village and it busied itself with field fortification. Towards evening Armagnac approached from Canosa. After some discussion in the French command it was decided to attack. A frontal assault of heavy cavalry and infantry went in as the light faded, and after about an hour of combat along the trench and staked rampart which the Spaniards had constructed the French were in full flight. Most of the horse escaped but the infantry was annihilated and the guns and baggage captured¹¹⁸.

A number of sources for the battle of Cerignola talk of a dispute between Armagnac and Yves d'Alègre over tactics¹¹⁹. Alègre, supported by Chandée, captain of the Swiss, urged attack on the Spanish position whilst Nemours advised caution. Jean d'Auton suggests that the Roy d'armes of Champagne even threatened to report Armagnac's miserable hesitancy to the King, whilst Louis d'Ars, supporting the Viceroy, entered into a heated exchange with Alègre¹²⁰. There is no doubt that the solidarity of the French high command had all but disintegrated by this time. We have already noted the reports of disagreement between the Viceroy, Aubigny and La Palice over the siege of Barletta.

118. Auton, *iii*, pp. 167-76; Giovio, *op.cit.*, pp. 110-13; Guicciardini, *op.cit.*, pp. 79-81; A. Bernaldez, *Memorias del reinado de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. M. Gomez-Moreno and J. de M. Garriazo (Madrid, 1962), pp. 422-8; Lojendio, *op.cit.*, pp. 210-21 and Los Heros, *op.cit.*, pp. 61-6.

119. Auton, p. 170; Giovio, *op.cit.*, p. 112; Guicciardini, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

120. Auton, pp. 170-1.

Aubigny had since been sent to Calabria, where his campaign was brought to a close by his defeat at Seminara by fresh Spanish forces from Sicily, a week before the battle of Cerignola. Other insolent lieutenants remained in Apulia. La Palice had felt himself ill-protected at Ruvo when Armagnac had marched south to punish the rebels of Castellaneta - he had written to Louis XII advising him that he should hold the Viceroy responsible for any ill Ruvo might suffer¹²¹. La Palice was now in Spanish hands but Alègre continued the tradition of disobedience and, according to Giovio, he had accused Armagnac of timidity and incompetence - the Viceroy's strategy had only served to weaken his army¹²². Indeed, at one stage in his narrative Jean d'Auton sums up this parlous state of affairs by commenting that "he had been told by several people that the Viceroy had been ill-obeyed by his captains and they ill-supported by him¹²³."

Whatever the acrimony before the opening of the battle, however, it seems improbable that Armagnac would have made his decision to charge simply from pique, as some sources claim. Brantôme even maintains that the Viceroy was so incensed by Alègre's abuse that he had to be restrained from plunging his sword into his persecutor's neck, to avenge his wounded Gascon pride; frustrated in

121. Ibid., p. 138.

122. Giovio, op.cit., p. 112.

123. Auton, p. 147.

this way, Armagnac launched his charge to demonstrate his mettle in combat¹²⁴. The explanation of the Spanish chronicler, Bernaldez, for Nemours' decision to attack seems more convincing: the French always intended to charge their enemy's position, rightly believing that the Spaniards were weary after their march from Barletta; but the timing of the assault was determined by the Spanish artillery which began to inflict intolerable casualties amongst the French as they made their dispositions. Hence Armagnac and the heavy cavalry which he led moved into the charge to escape damaging fire¹²⁵. This schema would also explain why the French horse and foot were as yet unaligned when the attack began¹²⁶. In short, it would appear that the undoubted dissensions in the French command which plagued Armagnac's campaign have traditionally been telescoped onto this moment of crisis in the interests of dramatic effect. At last the Viceroy had the chance to deal with the main Spanish field army after so many months of inactivity. Admittedly the

124. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, iii, pp. 94-5.

125. Bernaldez, op.cit., pp. 426-7.

126. Giovio, op.cit., p. 112. It seems unlikely that the echelon formation of the French array was anything more than accidental, although it has usually been portrayed as a tactical design, Bridge, op.cit., p. 177, Pieri, op.cit., p. 410 and Lojendio, op.cit., p. 216.

enemy position was strong and it was growing dark, but who had ever withstood the charge of Europe's finest heavy cavalry, supported by her most feared footsoldiers?

"They charged so straight and with such fury that it was a marvellous thing to see¹²⁷." Louis d'Armagnac was hit by three arquebus balls and fell from his horse; he turned to face the Spanish counter-attack and was consumed in the *melée*¹²⁸. That night of the 28th. of April, the Spaniards searched for the body of the Viceroy by torchlight. They were told by one of the dead man's captured pages to look for a young, handsome and well-built figure with two rings on his right hand and a partially shaved head. The corpse was finally discovered, with its three wounds in head and belly¹²⁹. Bernaldez claims that Gonzalo wept at the sight of the stricken corpse of "... such a beautiful man." Escorted to the convent of San Francesco in Barletta, it was interred with some ceremony¹³⁰.

French resistance in the Regno crumbled rapidly after this reverse. Aubigny in Calabria surrendered upon news of the defeat. The bulk of the survivors of Cerignola fled precipitately as far as Gaeta, on the fringes of the Kingdom. Louis d'Ars held

127. Bernaldez, op.cit., p. 427.

128. Auton, pp. 173 and 175.

129. Bernaldez, op.cit., p. 429. Giovio observes that Armagnac's corpse was identified by marks on the shoulder, op.cit., p.114, so no doubt the face was disfigured beyond certain recognition.

130. Bernaldez, loc.cit..

up at Venosa to continue a rearguard action for months, which never however threatened the Spanish victory. The city of Naples offered its submission, and Gonzalo entered it on the 14th of May and took its castles from the French. Although a fresh army was dispatched from the north later in the year to suffer another wretched Neapolitan winter, in an effort to reverse the decision of Cerignola, Naples was not regained.

Armagnac's tenancy of command in Naples ended in monumental failure. The French army, first weakened by months of wearily indecisive campaigning around Barletta, was finally destroyed in a suicidal charge on an earthwork defended by pikes, thirteen canon and hand firearms. This spectacular failure has made Louis d'Armagnac the victim of damaging charges of stupidity by modern historians. But such charges are perhaps a little unfair. Contemporary and later opinion saw Armagnac as a hero. Jean d'Auton expressed the view that the Viceroy was a good, virtuous and wise prince whose sense of honour and desire for glory prompted him to lead the charge at Cerignola in person¹³¹. For Brantôme Nemours was "... this brave and valiant (man)...¹³²." This view, that Armagnac was both courageous and prudent, is echoed in Spanish sources¹³³. No doubt death in battle helped to salvage the Viceroy's reputation. Furthermore, we know

131. Auton, iii, p. 171.

132. Brantôme, op.cit., vol. i, p. 188.

133. Lojendio, op.cit., p. 177.

that Armagnac failed to win or retain the loyalty of his principal lieutenants and that Louis XII continually entertained the idea of replacing him with Louis de Saluces¹³⁴. In the end, however, it was Armagnac who emerged with more credit than most. His chief tormentor, Yves d'Alègre, who had tried to make himself a fortune in the Capitanate by robbery and the expropriation of local supplies, and who had had charge of the rearguard at Cerignola which fled almost before it was engaged¹³⁵, was disgraced and banished from France¹³⁶. Saluces, who arrived at Gaeta in June as the new Viceroy, scarcely had more authority over his subordinates than his predecessor: at the end of the month La Trémoille told Cardinal d'Amboise that he had heard that "... the captains therewere not very obedient to the Viceroy...¹³⁷." Insubordination was always a lurking threat in an army which had developed no organised command-structure or hierarchy of rank¹³⁸. A commander-in-chief, especially if comparatively young and inexperienced, was liable to have his authority undermined by lieutenants who felt themselves his equals or superiors, particularly if his

134. Diarii, cols. 449, 574 and 852.

135. Auton, pp. 150-1 and 174; Giovio, op.cit., p.99.

136. Bridge, op.cit., iii, p. 201.

137. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 126.

138. Contamine, Guerre, Etat et société à la fin du moyen âge, pp. 449-50.

campaign did not prosper. Louis d'Armagnac was indisputably both loyal and brave. He was faced in Gonzalo de Córdoba by an adversary who is generally held to have been pre-eminent amongst generals of the early sixteenth century. It would always have required a supreme effort of military and naval organisation to maintain French control of Naples in opposition to an enemy possessed of a firm base in Sicily, whilst relying upon Provence and Liguria as one's own springboard. The attempt to do so without adequate naval resources proved disastrous - after all, Prégent de Bidoux's defeat at Otranto cost Louis XII his entire galley fleet¹³⁹. As for the battle of Cerignola itself, criticism of Armagnac's tactics might be justified in terms of the principles of military science as they came to be developed in later centuries but at the same time perhaps a little unrealistic in historical context. One day the new Spanish army was going to catch up with antiquated French battle tactics - Louis d'Armagnac was simply the unfortunate in charge on the day that it did so.

139. Spont, op.cit., p. 406.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GASTON DE FOIX, GOVERNOR OF MILAN

The claim of Gaston de Foix to greatness has never been questioned. We can see the heroic legend taking shape at the very moment of his death. Three days after the battle of Ravenna Bayard wrote to his uncle from the field:

"My lord," he began, "if the King has won the battle I swear to you that we poor gentlemen have undoubtedly lost it, for ... my lord of Nemours ... was slain, with the result that all the grief and mourning ever were as nothing compared with that which has been expressed, and continues to be so, in our army, since it seems that we have been defeated. I promise you my lord that it is the unluckiest princely death these last hundred years, and had he lived he would have accomplished feats which no prince has done; and those over here can well exclaim that they have lost their father, and as for myself... I cannot but live in desolation, because I have lost so much I cannot tell you."¹

Brantôme tells us that Foix was known as "... the thunder-bolt of Italy, owing to the military exploits which he performed in so short a time, just like a flash of lightning which in a moment does great damage wherever it strikes."² By 1607 the dramatist Claude Billard was composing his tragedy, "Gaston de Foix", whose entire first act consists of self-congratulations uttered by

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1. Le loyal serviteur, Histoire du... seigneur de Bayard, ed. Roman, p. 434.
 2. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, vol. iii, pp. 158-9.

Gaston himself. The modern editor of this now understandably obscure piece notes that the subject matter of the play is unusual for the seventeenth century, dramatic material normally being drawn from ancient history at the time.³

By the early seventeenth century therefore, Gaston de Foix had been raised to the level of a classical hero. And there to some extent he still stands, for his short life, with its consequent brevity of documentation, has discouraged prospective biographers - the man has remained unexplored and the verdict of such as Brantôme and Billard left thus intact. Short as it may have been the career of Gaston de Foix is however sufficiently well documented to enable us to reconstruct the man in human form, and a study of it does much to illustrate some of the relations between the French Crown and its servants during our period, as well as providing an interesting comparison with the career of Gaston's fellow Gascon, Louis d'Armagnac, whose life had so remarkably foreshadowed Foix's own in more than one respect.

Gaston de Foix was the only son of Jean de Foix, vicomte de Narbonne, and of Marie d'Orléans, sister of Louis XII. Born on the 10th of December 1489, at Mazères in what is now the département of Ariège, Gaston was thus not yet eleven years old when his father died

3. E.H. Polinger, Claude Billard's tragedy, "Gaston de Foix" (New York, 1931), p.5.

in November 1500. His mother meanwhile had expired in 1493, so that the boy came from a fairly early age to be raised under the tutelage of the King, his uncle⁴. As a child Gaston is continually prominent in Louis XII's company, although he was separated from the royal household in 1503 when he went with two other young French princes to Valenciennes as a hostage for the security of Philip the Fair, who was travelling through France from Spain. The stay at Valenciennes was a long one, from early February to early July, but it seems that the boys were generously entertained; Philip instructed his noble servants to welcome them and to provide diversions, and particularly to bring their birds to Valenciennes and to take the young hostages hunting "either in company with greyhounds, with the net or the crossbow, wherever the most game might be..." The boys' chief Burgundian host noted that they were treated to tennis, banquets and other entertainments, besides hunting, during their enforced vacation⁵.

Less amusing duties called later in the same year when Gaston acted as a pallbearer at the funeral of the Duke of Bourbon in Mâcon and then as a formal mourner at that of the distinguished courtier, Louis de Ligny, in

4. Anselme, vol. iii, pp. 377-8; Dictionnaire de biographie française, fascicule lxxix (1976), p. 209.

5. Le Glay, Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et l'Autriche, vol.i, pp. 60, n.4, 61 and 64-5.

Lyons.⁶ The year 1503 also marked Gaston de Foix's coming of age as a government servant, for in December he was officially invested with the governorship of Dauphiné, which his father had held before him, meriting the appointment, in the King's words, by dint of "... the growth of his spirit in honest pursuits and the virtues in which we daily see him increasingly flourish⁷." During the Genoese expedition of 1507 Gaston remained "close by the person of the King", and in June he took a leading part in the ceremony which attended the meeting of Louis and Ferdinand of Aragon at Savona; the latter, now his brother-in-law, having married Gaston's younger sister, Germaine, made him gifts of two gold collars, a rapier and a belt "... all most rich⁸." In short, Gaston de Foix was moving in the very highest circles, as befitted his status as the best-connected nobleman in Europe. After the return from Italy, Foix was accorded his majority by an ordinance of October 1507 and in the following month he received from the King the duchy of Nemours⁹.

6. Auton, vol. iii, pp. 247 and 311.

7. B.N., Clair. 954, p. 117 and fr. 4604, fols 18 vo.-19; G.R., no. 7851.

8. Fleuranges, Histoire des choses mémorables, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xvi, p.166; Auton, vol. iv, p. 359.

9. Stein, Inventaire analytique des ordonnances enregistrées au Parlement de Paris, no. 1446; A.N., K. 78, no.17.

Meanwhile in 1500 Gaston had inherited his father's pretensions to the Foix inheritance, pretensions which had arisen from the extinction of male heirs of Jean de Foix's elder brother. The lands of Foix and Navarre were now held by Jean's niece, Catherine, the wife of Alain d'Albret's eldest son, Jean. Louis took the initiative in attempting to restore the inheritance to his nephew: in February 1502 the Parlement of Paris rescinded the treaties by which Jean de Foix had renounced his rights to the lands in return for cash¹⁰. The legal process was pursued for years - although there is no evidence that Gaston himself was much interested - and the only reward from the interminable affair was the provision of a pension for Gaston from Catherine, by order of the Parlement¹¹. Perhaps this was as much as Louis XII at first expected to gain - after all, as early as May 1502 he had received the homage of Jean d'Albret for the counties of Foix and Bigorre and the viscounties of Marsan, Gabardon and Nébouzan¹². The advance of royal control as far as the Pyrenees, let alone across them into Navarre, could never commend itself to Ferdinand of Aragon, and the displacement of Catherine by Gaston would surely have meant as much. By 1507 the rapprochement with Spain made the realisation

10. Dictionnaire de biographie française, loc.cit...

11. Notifications of its payment in 1504 and 1506 can be found in B.N., Moreau 370, pp. 62 and 323.

12. B.N., Doat 227, fol. 247.

of Louis XII's ambitions for his nephew appear more likely, but political circumstances and diversions over the next few years conspired to frustrate them. Gaston never formally renounced his pretension however; in November 1509, for example, he called himself "King of Navarre ... count of Foix... lord of Béarn ...¹³". But he was only ever to enjoy the titles¹⁴.

The failure of his territorial claims may not have proved much of a disappointment to Gaston de Foix. It is evident that his temperament was more attracted to knightly pursuits, and particularly the glamour of Italy, than it was to legal affairs. Gaston's earliest experience of Italy was no doubt his trip to Lombardy in 1499, when in October he accompanied the King in his triumphant entry into Milan¹⁵. He may well have travelled to the peninsula.

13. B.N., Doat 228, fol. 321.

14. It seems moreover that the acquisition of the duchy of Nemours was not without its problems. Luchaire notes that in 1509 there was a fracas at Court involving Foix and Gié, whilst about the same time partisans of Mallet de Graville raided Gaston's town of Etampes and killed some of his men, Alain le grand, p. 187. The trouble with Gié presumably had something to do with Nemours since Gié had married Armagnac's sister, Marguerite, in June 1503, to inherit the duchy - evidently losing it with his disgrace in 1504 or soon afterwards. Sadly the reason for Graville's raid on Etampes is even more mysterious. There appears to be no confirmation of, nor even allusion to, either quarrel in any other source.

15. Auton, i, p. 99.

again in company with his father or Louis XII in subsequent years, and he certainly went to Italy in 1507; in Milan in June he took part in the great tournament held over ten days, at which Gaston was praised for his contribution to the jousts, breaking three lances in his four courses in the lists¹⁶. These were intoxicating experiences and there is every indication that Gaston de Foix came to live for the prospect of Italian adventure. At one stage during these early years he wrote to a confidant from Paris, where he was attending a tedious session of the Parlement, presumably concerning his territorial claims; the affair was dragging and as it was already the end of March Gaston was afraid lest he be left behind when Louis XII journeyed to Italy:

"... I am writing immediately to the King that it be his wish to command me what he would have me do," Gaston wrote, "for I would not stay behind for anything in the world if he crosses the Alps. For this reason I am sending you this courier in haste, who has promised me to go and return inside four days, so please... present my letters to the King and urge him, if he crosses the mountains, to send for me, for I should be most unhappy if I were not with him on his journey."¹⁷

After accompanying Louis XII during the Venetian campaign of 1509, Foix first appears in Italy independently of his uncle in 1510. Jean Bouchet recalls that Gaston escaped to the peninsula without royal leave, in company with La Trémoille's son; Louis was only momentarily angry, quickly

16. Ibid., iv, pp. 319-20.

17. B.N., fr. 2929, fol. 11.

deciding to let his nephew have his way and even sending money after him¹⁸. It seems likely that Bouchet's tale of boyish impudence is something of a sentimental embellishment of the facts. Probably Gaston had been pestering the King for his leave for some time, until Louis, perhaps with more than a little reluctance, granted it. This seems to have been in the spring of 1510, for on the 8th. of May the Imperial envoy in France reported that Louis had dispatched Gaston de Foix to Italy with a body of horse¹⁹. By the 20th. he had crossed the Alps²⁰.

The young Duke of Nemours was quick to distinguish himself on campaign. In July 1510 he was prominent at the capture of Monselice from the Venetians²¹; in August he was reported in command of 300 lances operating near Legnago²²; the next month he secured Como in the face of the Swiss threat²³. In short, not only was Foix soon in action but he rapidly gained himself a measure of renown as a commander. When therefore on the 11th. of March 1511 Chaumont d'Amboise died and the offices of lieutenant-general and governor of Milan thus fell vacant, Gaston had already established a claim to be considered for these appointments. A number of candidates recommended them-

18. Bouchet, Le panégyric du chevalier sans reproche, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xiv, p. 460.

19. Le Glay, op.cit., p. 338.

20. Lettres de Louis XII, vol. i, p. 230.

21. ibid., p. 279.

22. Diarii, vol. xi, col. 85.

23. Le Glay, op.cit., p. 357.

selves in effect. Fleuranges tells us that while he lay ill at Corregio, Chaumont had given "total charge" of the army to Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, to conduct future operations²⁴. Certainly Trivulzio had been Chaumont's most experienced lieutenant and his military credentials were unrivalled, but as a Guelf his appointment to the governorship of Milan might prove troublesome²⁵. Gaston de Foix appeared a more suitable candidate for the latter post. Towards the end of March the signory of Venice heard that, upon receiving news of Chaumont's death, Louis XII had dispatched the commission of governor to his nephew. Early the next month this information was confirmed - Foix had been appointed governor whilst Louis was sending the Duke of Longueville to act as lieutenant-general of the army, in concert with Trivulzio²⁶. Whether the late Chaumont's dual functions were thus divided between Foix and Longueville, as Venetian intelligence suggests, is not clear, however. Longueville certainly arrived to assume his command, apparently in May, but by early June was ill with fever and by July back in France²⁷. Soon after hearing news of Longueville's incapacity, and no doubt in consequence of this, Louis XII sent Foix his commission as governor of Milan, according to a report

24. Fleuranges, op.cit., pp. 198-9.

25. ibid., p. 234.

26. Diarii, vol. xii, cols. 77 and 110.

27. Le Glay, op.cit., pp. 395, 415 and 420; Lettres, ii, pp. 263 and 265.

from France of the 18th. of June²⁸. There is therefore some conflict between our sources concerning the circumstances of Nemours' assumption of command, reflecting perhaps some indecision on Louis' part. It seems best to conclude that Gaston de Foix took up both functions only in June - his presence with the army on campaign in Emilia in the spring of 1511²⁹ hardly suggests that he had yet assumed any civil responsibility in Milan. Until Foix's commission arrived, Trivulzio commanded the French army, as he had done in effect since Chaumont's fatal illness, but by his letter of the 20th. of July we can see that Gaston is now in control³⁰. By August he is ordering movements of troops as the army commander³¹. Nevertheless Trivulzio evidently retained a position of almost equal importance to Gaston's own throughout the latter's tenure of command.

Gaston de Foix had been invested with supreme authority in Lombardy at the age of twenty-one. Prato describes him as "... of medium height, with a round, well-shaped face, though pale, and with a refined if rather

28. Ibid., p. 270. On the other hand Gaston was paid his salary for the governorship of Milan for fully nine-and-a-half months of 1511, A.N., J 910, no. 2 bis..

29. See for example references to Foix in two letters of Trivulzio, B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 95 and n.a.fr. 7647, fol. 231.

30. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 67.

31. Ibid., fol. 69 and Diarii, xii, col. 428.

severe and haughty nature, and somewhat given to luxury." On occasion Foix would be attended by a great company of followers, but commonly only by a single page³². A Venetian observer in 1512 described Nemours as short and with a big head³³. He dressed himself in fine clothes and at the battle of Ravenna was to wear a splendid garment emblazoned with the arms of Foix and Navarre³⁴. His taste was for the romance of the joust above all, as we might expect from his background, and he was to spend a deal of time at Ferrara indulging both his love of the lists and his fondness for Lucrezia Borgia, duchess of Ferrara, whose black and grey favour he sported³⁵.

Even in an age when youth was no barrier to high command for those of lofty birth, Gaston de Foix's assumption of the government of Lombardy when scarcely more than a boy seems remarkable. Yet his extreme youth seems to have inspired no adverse comment nor surprise. Indeed Trivulzio, the old hand in Italy, appears to have thought Foix fully worthy of responsibility³⁶. Besides,

32. Prato, Storia di Milano, in A.S.I., vol. iii, p. 296.

33. Diarii, vol. xiii, fol. 517.

34. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 315.

35. Ibid., pp. 255-6 and 267. The thirty year old Lucrezia was a woman of great charm and vivacity, who inspired devotion in many admirers - see M.E. Mallett, The Borgias, the rise and fall of a Renaissance dynasty (Paladin edition, 1971), pp. 232-8. It is interesting that Bayard's biographer depicts Gaston as a jovial, almost happy-go-lucky, young man, in some contrast to Prato's image.

36. Trivulzio had not however envisaged Gaston as lieutenant-general in Lombardy, even as late as June 1511, when he had told the King that in his view there

the new governor was accompanied by a collection of mature advisers³⁷. Nonetheless Chaumont d'Amboise had found his long tenure of command in Lombardy a considerable burden. In early 1504, for instance, in a letter to Louis XII's secretary, Robertet, he had expressed his desire to be relieved of his post - he would have preferred the governorship of Burgundy or Languedoc³⁸. Later, in September 1509, Chaumont had pleaded with his uncle, Cardinal d'Amboise, for an end to his uncomfortable ordeal: "I would beg you ... that it please you to have me discharged... Apart from the expense, the climate here is so inimical to me that I have not enjoyed a day of health these last two months, and my sciatica is killing me³⁹." In view of Chaumont's difficulties, Gaston's youthful vigour must have seemed a distinct

36. Cont/...

were two outstanding candidates for the task of leading an army to aid the Emperor in the east, namely Nemours or, "... if (the King) did not wish to invest the latter with such authority...", La Palice, B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 86 vo..

37. Abrégé de la vie de Gaston de Foix, in B.N., dossiers bleus 273.

38. B.N., Dupuy 279, fol. 28.

39. B.N., Mélanges de Colbert 13, fol. 59 vo..

advantage. Besides Milan was not an isolated posting like Naples, for example; communications with France were first-class and Gaston might even come to consult the King in person, as he did in August 1511 when the Court was in Dauphiné⁴⁰. If the Lombard climate was unpleasant, with its seasonal extremes of temperature, there is nonetheless never any indication that Foix enjoyed anything but good health during his short but energetic career in the peninsula. Good health and an eagerness to serve, though necessary, were scarcely sufficient for Gaston's task however. A certain lack of judgement appears to have surfaced in what seems to have been the first crisis of Foix's governorship. In late July 1511 a brawl in Milan between a number of Lombards and Frenchmen left a few of the latter dead in the streets. Gaston lost his temper and, having arrested a handful of Italian suspects, he intended to hang them. Trivulzio and others, aware of the peril to civil order threatened by such a course of action, succeeded in dissuading Nemours from his vengeance⁴¹. Perhaps such clumsiness was only to be expected at first. After all, Gaston de Foix's rise in the world of high command had been spectacularly rapid - in 1509 he had not even been in charge of his own *compagnie d'ordonnance*⁴².

40. Lettres de Louis XII, iiii, p. 18. He may have gone to France for a short time in September as well, Diarii, xii, col. 527.

41. Ibid., cols. 322 and 377.

42. Roger de Béarn received the captain's wages for 1509, B.N., p.o.237, no.32.

The French campaign in Italy during 1511 largely followed the pattern of the previous year - early success giving way to winter retreat. By June the papal forces in Emilia had been roundly defeated; Julius II had lost Bologna and had little power to prevent the French from marching on Rome. But Louis held up the advance of Trivulzio's army and began to talk peace with Julius, a man whose overriding aim was to drive the French from Italy. Louis lost the initiative and with the publication in Rome on the 4th. of October of a Holy League, formed of Julius, Venice and Spain, for the defence of the Papal States, to which England adhered in November⁴³, the desertion of France's major allies of the League of Cambrai of 1508 was almost complete. Gaston de Foix's assumption of command thus took place against a background of deteriorating diplomatic fortunes and growing menace to Milan.

The chief threat to Lombardy lay to the north, with the Swiss, who had effectively become clients of Rome by an alliance in March 1510, and who had staged an abortive invasion of the Milanese the following autumn. When two couriers from Schwyz and Fribourg, were killed at Lugano in the summer of 1511 relations with France worsened again. The matter of reparation for the injury was raised with Foix by the Diet of Luzern in September

43. Bridge, A history of France, vol. iv, pp. 79 and 83.

and referred to the King.⁴⁴ Louis handled the affair so clumsily that by November ten thousand Swiss troops were poised to march southwards whilst two months before only the men of Schwyz had been disposed to consider war⁴⁵. The King was not prepared to secure a treaty with the Swiss by offering higher pensions to their leaders than had been usual in the past; nor did he propose to spend freely to defend Lombardy - in short Louis thought little of Swiss menaces⁴⁶. The French were dilatory in the handling of negotiations with the Confederacy in later 1511, and Gaston de Foix was Louis' accomplice in this diplomatic failure⁴⁷. In mid-October, Pandolfini, Florentine ambassador in Milan, complained of French ineptitude: "The government here... and the behaviour of the French are such," he wrote, "that it would not surprise me if one day they suffer very much as a result... and I believe that in the long run no good can come of maladministration⁴⁸". It would seem that until December Louis and Nemours saw the chief threat to the east; La Palice's detachment in Friuli was ordered

44. Kohler, Les Suisses dans les guerres d'Italie, pp. 233-4 and pièces justificatives, p. 609.

45. Ibid., p. 249.

46. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques de la France avec la Toscane, vol. ii, pp. 544-5; Le Glay, op.cit., p. 469.

47. Kohler, op.cit., pp. 233-49.

48. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 538.

to retreat in view of Swiss menaces⁴⁹ but Foix himself was to advance to Parma, where he remained until the end of November, in preparation for any papal attempt to retake Bologna⁵⁰. To be fair to the French, the publication of the Holy League in early October understandably caused them to fear above all for their eastern flank, whilst by early November they believed that they had bought off the Swiss⁵¹. Yet this mistaken belief only points to their diplomatic incompetence - the French never really took the measure of Swiss hostility. When the invasion was launched in late November 1511 it came as something of a surprise and there were complaints in Milan that the administration had not given enough advance warning to evacuate stores from the enemy's path⁵². Gaston de Foix hurried back from Parma to the capital, where the scare was intense. At Blois there was panic in early December; an Imperial official wrote that "... the French... feared their destruction as if it were fated that they should lose Italy, and were so scared that the Emperor might abandon them that they were pissing in their pants...⁵³."

49. Lettres de Louis XII, vol. iii, p. 82.

50. Ibid., p. 93; Le Glay, op.cit., pp. 453 and 463, Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 539.

51. A. Renaudet, Le Concile gallican de Pise-Milan (Paris, 1922), pp. 398-9; Lettres, iii, p. 92.

52. Diarii, vol. xiii, col. 312.

53. Lettres, p. 101.

Once the Swiss were approaching Milan there was furious activity in the construction of defences and assembling of levies, but on the whole the Milanese needed no encouragement to resist an invasion whose potential outcome appalled them. At last the same strategy as had been applied in 1510 foiled the Swiss, namely Fabian tactics, helped by bad weather.

The history of the Swiss crisis of 1511 illuminates many of the facets of the relationship between King and lieutenant-general. In theory of course Foix was Louis' personal representative in Milan, his plenipotentiary agent. In practice however it was impossible for two men to act as one - the King could never in effect ratify in advance every decision his lieutenant-general was to make. Besides, the critical diplomatic position of France from October 1511, and perhaps also the paternalistic solicitude of the King towards his nephew, seem only to have encouraged Louis XII to interfere further in affairs in Lombardy, whilst the proximity of Milan had always appeared to facilitate direct control of policy from France. As a result it was not surprising that Gaston himself had no great confidence in the validity of some of his powers. All conspired to inhibit clear policies and hold up decisions. In October 1511 Pandolfini had written that "... nothing advanced one step without the especial command of the King⁵⁴." Later the same man observed that

54. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 533.

"the desire of His Majesty in France to control the war (in Lombardy) and to regulate expenditure seemed to him a bad thing which could cause inconvenience to the French, since the distance was so great and opportunities which arose evaporated in delay⁵⁵." A week later the Florentine was still complaining that everything had to be determined by Louis and the delay in communications between King and Governor would prove the undoing of the French⁵⁶.

By the end of 1511 Pandolfini had become so pessimistic about France's chances of holding Milan in the face of her combined enemies that in his frustration he came to exaggerate the powerlessness of Nemours. Louis never attempted to supervise every detail of policy, and if Pandolfini soon came to the conclusion that it was fruitless to raise a matter such as the Council of Pisa with Foix, since it entirely depended upon the King's will⁵⁷, Florence was never to become so disillusioned as to recall her permanent embassy from Foix's court. Other allies of France also thought it worthwhile to make representations to Gaston as well as Louis in affairs which concerned them. Early in 1512 the Emperor Maximilian asked his daughter in the Low Countries to send him a gentleman who might act as his envoy to the Duke of Nemours⁵⁸. Maximilian had dispatched a secretary to Milan

55. Ibid., p. 542.

56. Ibid., pp. 544-5.

57. Renaudet, opcit. p.515.

58. Correspondance de... Maximilien I et de Marguerite d'Autriche, ed. M. le Glay, S.H.F., vol. i (Paris, 1839), p. 493.

in the summer of 1511 to solicit Foix for military aid⁵⁹ and by March 1512 was still making representations to Nemours through a variety of envoys⁶⁰. The Bentivogli begged Foix to invade the Papal States⁶¹ whilst the Swiss Diet communicated with Milan rather than Blois⁶².

However misplaced the hopes of these supplicants for a direct and immediate response from Foix were, it was obvious to them that not only was the latter the channel through which royal policy in Italy was conducted, but that the part played by Gaston himself in determining that policy was real enough to merit attempts to influence him.

59. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 69.

60. Le Glay, Négociations, i, p. 482 and Lettres de Louis XII, iii, pp. 186-7. The Imperial ambassador to France, André de Burgo, even undertook a mission to Milan in the winter of 1511-2, leaving his secretary, Le Veau, at Blois. Subsequently Jean Hauvart arrived as Maximilian's representative with the French army - being presumably the man sent by Margaret to her father in answer to his request. Meanwhile Pandolfini was Florence's permanent envoy to Milan throughout Foix's governorship, until he was replaced in March 1512, although the Republic made use of special agents as well - in September 1511, for example, Machiavelli had an interview with Gaston in Milan, whilst on his way to the French Court to try to persuade Louis to abandon his plans for a general council of the Church at Pisa.

61. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 67.

62. Franco-Swiss diplomatic relations were resumed in the new year and it is interesting that embassies from both France and Gaston were dispatched to Zurich, Kohler, op.cit., pièces justificatives, p. 618.

There was one area of policy where Louis XII insisted upon maintaining tight, if not minute, control and that was expenditure. Pandolfini wrote from Milan in mid-September 1511, indicating the friction caused by this issue: "Foix... intends to write to His Majesty," noted the envoy, "and to ask for authority to spend money ... as occasion daily demands. The King will certainly not agree to this as he does not wish that a single écu of extraordinary expenditure be disbursed over here, except by his own express advice and command." Pandolfini had already reminded the French in Milan of the many opportunities lost under Chaumont's rule, through the lack of gubernatorial authority to spend freely - such opportunities invariably vanished within ten or twelve days, which was hardly long enough to have a reply from the King on the appropriate matters. The French could only agree with Pandolfini's conclusions⁶³. Two weeks after this dispatch Gaston himself revealed his nervousness about spending money in a letter from Brescia to his uncle: "Sire", he began, "if by chance La Palice is in some trouble or Verona... comes under siege, all your captains and I have decided that in such circumstances

63. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, pp. 530-1. The normal travel-time of letters between Lombardy and Blois seems to have been about one week. It was possible for a dispatch from Milan to reach a town as near as Valence in two days however, Lettres, iii, p. 5, but Louis XII spent most of the period of Gaston's governorship in the north of France.

we will raise some infantry... But trust in me, Sire, that if not greatly needed I shall not levy the troops⁶⁴." It is interesting that Foix neglects to ask permission to raise the foot but simply presents the King with a decision. To deal with Louis XII over finance evidently encouraged a bargaining mentality; it was felt by those in Lombardy that honest requests for money would bear meagre fruit. As Pandolfini observed in late October 1511, Foix and his captains had been discussing in council the requirements for the defence of the duchy; finally it had been decided to ask the King that 20,000 new footsoldiers be raised and other extraordinary outgoings sanctioned, in the knowledge that Louis would only agree to a given proportion of whatever was demanded, on principle, so that the more inflated the request the larger the eventual grant⁶⁵.

With the gathering Swiss menace of late 1511, royal parsimony began to assume a new significance. For a start, Nemours and his advisers were dissatisfied with Louis' refusal to consider increased pensions for the Swiss: "it seemed to them that the miserliness of the King would be the wrong remedy for the Swiss malady and they would have liked authority to raise new troops as

64. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 75.

65. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 541.

need arose⁶⁶". Even as late as the beginning of December, with the enemy on the march, preparations for defence were proceeding slowly since Foix was wary of spending without licence⁶⁷. "I do not see that it will be possible to quell this trouble without expending funds," lamented the Florentine ambassador, "and the King hates expense⁶⁸". In the end Gaston de Foix was able to do little harm to the invader as he possessed insufficient infantry.

Since the resolution of the Swiss crisis hinged on the question of money, the matter was largely outside Foix's control - he had to concur with royal decisions despite his own, somewhat tardy, apprehensions, which did in fact lead him to dispatch some funds to Switzerland in appeasement attempts anyway⁶⁹. But it was not only in matters of expenditure that Foix waited upon his master's sanction. He seems to have developed a fairly clear notion of his permitted area of independent action - in effect campaign tactics - and to have left the rest to the King. Gaston de Foix was above all a soldier and there is no indication that he resented Louis' total control of diplomatic affairs and grand strategy. The Florentines were frustrated in their attempts to convince Gaston of the unsuitability of Pisa as a venue for a General Council

66. Ibid., loc.cit..

67. Ibid., p. 543.

68. Ibid., p. 545.

69. Kohler, op.cit., p. 249.

of the Church, against the desire of the King, as we have seen; the reply which the Bentivogli had received to their demand for a French offensive against the Papal states in July 1511 had been a flat refusal, in accordance with Louis' directive that papal territory was not to be harmed⁷⁰; Gaston's response to the request of Maximilian's envoys in Milan for the loan of French troops, made on the 1st. of March 1512, was perhaps typical: "... Nemours replied that he had no brief from the King on the matter, without whose order he dared try nothing; but he would inform him⁷¹". Foix even waited upon Louis' decision in as small a matter as the fate of prisoners, such as the Venetian governor of Brescia, taken at the fall of the city in February 1512⁷². This is not to say that Gaston had no opinions of his own, that he was a mere cipher, but simply that he knew his brief and was rarely tempted to step out of bounds. Nor did this mean that the interests of lieutenant-general and King never conflicted, for the strict economy of the latter often appeared to threaten the success of French arms, as we have seen in

70. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 67.

71. Le Glay, op.cit., p. 482.

72. Diarii, xiii, col. 524. It seems that Foix did not wait for royal sanction in the case of another prisoner, Avogadro, leader of the Brescian rebels - he was promptly beheaded in the piazza, ibid., loc. cit..

reference to the Swiss crisis, for instance. In the circumstances, Gaston de Foix's confidence in his ability to defeat any and all of Louis' enemies in Italy, given adequate manpower - a confidence evident in his correspondence and contrasting refreshingly with the hesitancy and occasional panic displayed at home - is all the more remarkable. Such confidence was no doubt strengthened by the harmony which reigned in the French camp in Lombardy; all sources agree that Gaston was scrupulous in taking advice from his lieutenants and Jean Bouchet notes that his success sprang in part from "... the counsel and wise conduct of the veteran commanders who were with him"⁷³. This modesty may well have done much to preclude any outbreak of dissension in the high command, of the type which disfigured Armagnac's campaign in Naples for example, but perhaps more important was the social status of Foix which was so high that he brooked no rival.

Nemours' powers in Italy were thus limited both by Louis' insistence on taking all important decisions (and many minor ones as well) and by royal control of the purse. Furthermore Foix's autonomy was circumscribed by his voluntary acceptance of guidance from captains and counsellors. Moreover, the exercise of those powers which were left to him was then impeded by more impersonal factors, particularly civil disobedience and indiscipline within his own army. The precarious nature of the French hold on Milan was made plain during the Swiss scare in

73. Bouchet, op.cit., p. 461.

December 1511 when the citizens obliged the retreating French forces to remain outside the city walls and then assumed command of the castle, according to Venetian reports⁷⁴. The French were in no mood to enforce their authority as so many of them were contemplating flight, knowing the savagery of the invader. The citizens' action was one of self-defence rather than rebellion, however; more ominous had been the alleged wish of some of the inhabitants of Como to deliver their town to the Swiss.⁷⁵

Less predictable than civil disobedience - which on the whole was confined to places under threat of imminent conquest by the enemy - was disorder in the ranks. There is no doubt that Gaston de Foix inspired loyalty and affection amongst many of his troops, especially his captains and gendarmes, but the perennial problem of control of the infantry in particular could not simply be swept aside by the mere reputation of the lieutenant-general. In February 1512 the Venetian senate learnt with glee that the landsknecht garrison of Verona had deserted the town, owing to lack of pay; funds were quickly raised, bringing the Germans back, but they then sacked the piazza "... as was their wont⁷⁶". Local levies could prove even

74. Diarii, xiii, cols. 334-5 and 345.

75. Le Glay, op.cit., p. 470.

76. Diarii, col. 461.

more alarmingly unreliable⁷⁷, but the most disturbing aspect of an army's behaviour was that, paradoxically, success could lead to disintegration as surely as could defeat. At Brescia, again in February, the French captains were at first unable to temper the slaughter of the sack. After the chaos had subsided Foix issued an order for the restoration of some property, which had been indiscriminately seized from friend as well as rebel, and this caused murmurs amongst the soldiery⁷⁸. The infantry of the day so obviously lived for loot that a Venetian spy was prompted to report in March that the French were planning to sack Modena to encourage their footsoldiers to remain with the army⁷⁹. Such thoughts would probably have been far from Foix's mind after the experience of Brescia, where his initial encouragement of the sack proved to be a serious miscalculation which undermined his future campaign. The Venetians heard that on the 5th. of March 1512, some two weeks after the fall of Brescia, an order was issued that all troops were to cross the Po, on pain of royal disgrace, since Foix was aiming to march southwards; very many French soldiers had gone to Milan, loaded with booty from Brescia⁸⁰. It took Gaston a few weeks to reassemble

77. On one occasion Venetian troops captured some Lombard footsoldiers, who put up no defence despite being superbly armed, ibid., col. 464.

78. Ibid., cols. 517-8.

79. Ibid., vol. xiv, col. 13.

80. Ibid., xiv, col. 23.

his forces after a conquest which proved also to be a setback⁸¹.

If the status of Foix and his kinship with the King of France had little bearing on the behaviour of the rank-and-file of his army, these factors were rather more important in colouring his relations with his captains. Whilst foreign diplomats might have concluded that approaches to Foix in an attempt to influence French policy were on the whole of little value, his subordinates could no doubt expect more benefit from their pleas for favour. Just as Foix was seen as the obvious intermediary for diplomatic exchange with the French Court by Louis' allies in the peninsula, so was he viewed as their crucial advocate by supplicants of the King in the army of Italy. No doubt Chaumont had performed such a function, but the advent to command of Gaston de Foix, the favoured royal nephew, must have come as a boon to captains across the Alps in search of royal favour. It is interesting after

81. The fact that Brescia would be sacked seems to have been assumed on all sides. Foix himself saw only two possible courses of action, immediate surrender of the place or sack, B.N., n.a.fr. 7647, fol. 237 vo.. The only order to pillage and kill appears to have originated with the German captains, but an eyewitness noted that Gaston did not demand a halt to the sack until the day after Brescia's capture, Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII, ed. Brodie and Brewer, vol. i, pt. I, pp. 517-8. Foix no doubt felt that if he could not obtain Brescia's prompt submission he would have to hand the city over to his marauding troops.

However, the French had been incensed by Brescia's rebellion - the Venetians had heard that they wanted to punish the rebels, even by "killing their children in their cribs", Diarii, xiii, col. 482.

all that when Chaumont had sought some consideration for himself he seems to have applied above all to Cardinal d'Amboise or Robertet. Looking at the surviving letters of Gaston de Foix to his uncle we can see him asking the King to help expedite a process of law in the Milanese senate on behalf of one suppliant⁸², to grant captain d'Aubigny permission to go on leave and to appoint a relative of the same to the command of Milan castle, and to find a place amongst the gentlemen of the household for a brother-in-law of Louis d'Ars⁸³. Later we find Gaston recommending the employment of a kinsman of the Marquis of Montferrat, and at the same time writing to the King on behalf of the executors of the will of a dead gendarme.⁸⁴

The Duke of Nemours may well have been pleased to leave Milan in early January 1512. Although the Swiss had retired and Gaston had stoutly resisted their demands for possession of Lugano and Locarno, the path of enemy retreat was marked by a trail of burnt-out villages, and the French had done little to try and impede the

82. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 69.

83. Ibid., fol. 73.

84. Ibid., fol. 77. Maulde-la-Clavière suggests also that in 1512 Foix asked the King to promote Roger de Béarn to the captaincy of the Montoison company, Auton, vol. i, p. 40, nl. Unfortunately no indication of source is given for the assertion, although it sounds plausible, even if the alleged request was to remain unfulfilled.

destruction⁸⁵. In short the Milanese were not satisfied with the handling of the affair and were already antagonised by the presence of the dissident Cardinals of the Council of Pisa in their city - they had begged Foix to cancel the proposed session of the Council for the 14th. of December and move the proceedings to Turin or some other foreign city before they were all excommunicated⁸⁶. However, Gaston left Milan, heading for Parma and leaving Trivulzio in charge in the capital, to embark on the great campaign of early 1512, upon which his renown as an outstanding strategist rests. He was not to return, except for a few days at the end of February. Since a full account of the campaign has been admirably presented in English already⁸⁷, it would seem best to avoid lengthy repetition and rather concentrate on some aspects of the war which have perhaps not been sufficiently explored.

The same enemies as in the previous year were assembled on the frontiers of Lombardy, but now they were joined by a Spanish army which had reached Emilia from Naples, and with the retreat of the Swiss this force seemed most dangerous as it threatened Louis XII's ally, Bologna. The decision to march to Bologna was not an immediate one. On the 13th. of January Foix wrote to the

85. Kohler, op.cit., pp. 273-9.

86. Diarii, xiii, col. 313.

87. Bridge, op.cit., vol. iv, pp. 121-59.

King from Parma, explaining the advantage of Finale-Emilia as a base of operations. He and his captains were agreed to proceed there, whence Ferrara, Bologna and Verona were all within easy reach should any one be threatened. Gaston was waiting on events, for he was not even certain on the 13th. where the Spanish army was⁸⁸. By the 19th. of January Foix was still only at Reggio-Emilia, having evidently abandoned the original plan of a quick advance to Finale. But on this day he received a plea from Lautrec - in garrison at Bologna - for aid, since the Spaniards had imposed a tight siege. Yet the army would not move precipitately, but would remain at Reggio for some time to hear news of other fronts and then advance to Finale. Foix was doubtful of his ability to reinforce Bologna anyway since, according to his information, the city was encircled by the enemy⁸⁹. Later in the month Gaston was implored for help by the Bentivogli, whilst he was at Finale, but the plea occasioned little response⁹⁰. Foix had one eye continually on the Venetians, hovering just east of Verona.

Whilst the French were thus cautiously waiting upon developments, the Venetians acted with less circumspection. At the time that Lautrec had petitioned Nemours the Signory had heard that Bologna had fallen. The receipt of this false news coincided with the advance of an army under Andrea

88. B.N., Dupuy 262, fol. 77.

89. Ibid., fol. 71.

90. Diarii, xiii, col. 430.

Gritti from Vicenza westwards towards the Adige, and it was not until the 21st. of January that Venice discovered that her information was bogus - by which time Gritti was across the river. It is possible that he would have advanced anyway, even without false news of the fate of Bologna, for the Venetians believed that the French would either remain in Emilia or return to confront the Swiss, who were always threatening to attack once more. Besides, Venetian confidence was high as it was known that Brescia was anxious to expel her French garrison and that Bergamo was similarly disaffected. When the Signory received news of the completion by the French of a pontoon bridge over the Po at Stellata, their concern became for the safety of Padua. In fact the idea that Brescia, captured by Gritti on the 3rd of February, was under threat did not occur to them.⁹¹ Meanwhile, on the night of the 4th. and 5th. of February Gaston de Foix entered Bologna, which had been in danger of capitulating; the entry was not only unseen but also unnoticed at first by the Spaniards, who drew off from the city the next day when they discovered the coup⁹². Surprisingly, the northern approaches to Bologna had been left unguarded and the French had been able to enter at their pleasure, despite Gaston's earlier reservations⁹³.

91. Ibid., cols. 399, 400-1, 403 and 449.

92. Bridge, op.cit., p. 127.

93. Diarii, xiv, col. 176 (relation of the campaign by Fabrizio Colonna).

Upon hearing of the French entry into Bologna, one prominent Venetian official was triumphant: surely Foix would be penned in there, and the way was now open for the Republic to reoccupy Verona and Valeggio⁹⁴. In France meanwhile all was consternation, especially after news of the fall of Brescia - "... Milan was thought lost and all the Frenchmen there⁹⁵." Both the Venetians and the French Court were however to be disabused of their respective hopes and fears by an exceptional manoeuvre on Foix's part. Having received a call for help from the French governor of Brescia, still holding out in its castle, he quickly moved off with the bulk of his army to cross the Po at Stellata, aiming to relieve him. Venice soon heard of the advance, whereupon the bridge over the Adige at Bonavigo was dismantled, to prevent the French from moving on Padua⁹⁶. Suddenly there was news of the rout of a force under Baglioni, which had escorted some guns to Brescia and was returning towards Bonavigo, unaware that the bridge there no longer existed. In fact Baglioni had been hit a glancing blow by the French near Isola della Scala, but not been seriously hurt, for Gaston had not expected to find him in his path. At last Venice realised that Nemours was making for Lombardy. The next day conversation in the city turned on the swiftness of the French march northwards - they had covered seventy 'miles'

94. Ibid., xiii, col. 461.

95. Lettres de Louis XII, iii, pp. 150 and 152.

96. Diarii, col. 467.

in two days, fully armed, "... which was an incredible thing⁹⁷." It took Gaston de Foix nine days to reach Brescia from Bologna, and the Marquis of Mantua, across whose domains the French army had quietly slipped, remarked later that no force within memory of man had traversed those marshy territories of his in the lower Po valley⁹⁸. Even so the Venetian senate was confident that Brescia could hold out in case of attack. Gritti was not so certain and wrote on the 15th. of February in some desperation, begging for reinforcements and gunpowder⁹⁹. His appeal was of no purpose, for the same day Foix appeared beneath Brescia's walls and in a short time the rebellious city was restored to French hands. The victors boasted that they would soon be in Naples, perhaps within as little as two months¹⁰⁰. But losses had been heavy and one eyewitness remarked on the large trenches dug by the French in the citadel to accommodate their dead, twenty to a grave¹⁰¹.

The task which faced Gaston de Foix in March 1512 was summed up by Pandolfini in mid-month: Nemours was under orders from Louis XII to find the papal-Spanish army, beat it, occupy the Papal States and then head for Naples without

97. Ibid., cols. 472, 475, 473 and 474.

98. Bridge, op.cit., iv, pp. 129-30 and 136.

99. Diarii, xiii, col. 491.

100. Ibid., cols. 522 and 529.

101. Ibid., col. 518.

delay, using all the forces at his command¹⁰². It had however taken the King some time to reach this bold decision, for although the members of the Council of Pisa clamoured for the immediate dispatch of Julius II, Louis himself was more hesitant¹⁰³. Nemours was confident that Lombardy was secure, following his victory at Brescia - he had heard that the Spaniards were perhaps moving north to join the Venetians but "... thought that news (of the loss of Brescia) would lead them to change their plans;" as for the Venetians they had no discipline without Spanish reinforcement, whilst "he thought the latter would be beaten¹⁰⁴." Any offensive by the French would have to wait upon reinforcements however¹⁰⁵. Foix spent the last week of February in Milan, in expectation of the order to advance, and if he had not yet received it by the time of his departure for Parma on the 1st. of March it followed soon afterwards¹⁰⁶. By the 8th. he had reached Reggio and was attempting to organise the assembly of his army at Finale¹⁰⁷. This army had

102. Cannestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., ii, pp. 576-7. In effect Pandolfini became a spy for the Holy League, since this information, passed from him back to Florence, then found its way to Rome and thence to the army of the League.

103. Renaudet, op.cit., p. 623.

104. B.N., n.a.fr. 7647, fols. 237 vo.-238.

105. Lettres, iii, p. 184.

106. Renaudet, op.cit., pp. 624 and 638; Le Glay, Négociations, p. 482.

107. Lettres, pp. 196-7.

moved south rather haphazardly to cross the Po at Casalmaggiore and, as well as being scattered, was much diminished in size through mass desertion following the sack of Brescia, quite apart from casualties of war¹⁰⁸. Four thousand French footsoldiers who had recently crossed the Alps were expected in Emilia by the middle of the month however¹⁰⁹. During much of March infantry reinforcements poured eastwards, by road and river; a Venetian report of the 18th. noted that Foix was searching for troops on all sides and predicted that "... this time the French were either going to lose Italy and their lives as well or else conquer the whole peninsula¹¹⁰". Louis urged his nephew to finish the war quickly and, if we are to believe Bayard's biographer, for a characteristic reason - the heavy cost of maintaining a large body of infantry¹¹¹. Reports on the state of the army of the Holy League would have encouraged the offensive spirit of the French had they heard them. Throughout the early months of 1512 the Pope complained about the inactivity of the Spanish forces. The army of the Viceroy of Naples was racked with disease¹¹², and a correspondent in Rome wrote in early March that everyone there believed that "... if the French sought out the Spaniards the latter would flee like

108. Diarii, vol. xiv, cols. 13, 23 and 15.

109. Lettres, p. 196.

110. Diarii, xiv, col. 40.

111. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 289,

112. Diarii, xiv, col. 7.

whores.¹¹³"

The opportunity to settle matters with the Holy League on the battlefield did not arrive as speedily as the French had hoped. This was for a number of reasons. Firstly Foix was still faced with the problem of concentrating his forces throughout most of March¹¹⁴; in addition weather conditions impeded his advance - he managed to reach Finale by the 16th. as planned, after a journey from Reggio through driving rain, with "the horses up to their bards in mud," but then floods marooned the army at Finale until the 22nd. of March¹¹⁵. Lastly the enemy retired before the French offensive into Romagna, from Budrio, near Bologna, towards Imola and then Faenza. The injustice done to Spanish morale by the malicious comment of Rome was revealed by the good order of the retreat; the Spaniards had no fear of battle - on their own terms; they were careful to avoid any surprise whilst all the time they were extending and attenuating Nemours' lines of supply. It was reported that the Spanish army contained two-thirds of the men who had fought at Cerignola nine years before, and that the French side included many such veterans as well. Remembering that defeat the French had no wish to assault their enemy in a fortified position, manned by the only troops of the League whom they really feared, the Spanish

113. Canestrini and Desjardins, op.cit., p. 574.

114. Lettres de Louis XII, iii, p. 215.

115. Ibid., pp. 200 and 214.

foot under Pedro Navarro¹¹⁶. In the end, however, this is exactly what they did, outside the papal city of Ravenna. Foix could quite simply wait no longer for a decision by early April: Louis had written to urge immediate combat owing to his fear of another Swiss invasion¹¹⁷ whilst the army itself was fast running out of food supplies¹¹⁸. Ravenna seemed the obvious place to attack as it was the enemy's major depot - even if it were not to yield quickly the Viceroy would be obliged to advance to defend it.

The evenness of the battle of Ravenna on the 11th. of April 1512 was reflected in the confused news which reached Venice, for it was two or three days after first hearing of the clash before the Signory discovered with certainty who had gained the victory¹¹⁹. The army of the Viceroy was routed after many hours of stubborn conflict, overwhelmed by force of numbers. Technically Gaston de Foix won the day, but the victory was worthless. The

116. Diarii, xiv, cols. 77 and 73. True to Spanish tradition, these troops were disgruntled through lack of pay and on the whole poorly endowed with protective clothing, but well-equipped with firearms and very combative, Torres, Sucesos de las armas de España en Italia, pp. 265 and 267.

117. B.N., Moreau 774, p. 18.

118. Fleuranges notes how on the morning of the battle of Ravenna, Gaston shared out his remaining rations - a flask of wine and a loaf - amongst his captains, op.cit., p. 215.

119. Diarii, xiv, cols. 95-105.

slaughter at Ravenna quite simply disembowelled the French army of Italy and led directly to the expulsion of France from Lombardy. It was reported after the battle that the victorious army now only numbered ten thousand men, too small a force to be able to capture much of the Romagna. The castellan of Ravenna believed that "the French had had such a hammering that it would be easy to put the enterprise to rights." In Ferrara it was said that "... if the Spaniards were defeated and had flown, the French were smashed¹²⁰." After a moment of panic in Rome, stability returned when the extent of French losses was realised. A handful of Romagnol towns opened their gates to advanced parties of the army of the Council of Pisa, but few of their castles fell. The forces of the Holy League soon began to regroup, and according to one correspondent "... nobody wanted the French any more" in Romagna¹²¹. At Blois there had been an agitated delay in recovering details of the battle - it was optimistically thought that Foix and his captains had been too concerned with consolidating their success to have had time to write¹²². But once the true facts were known, and the implications of the heavy losses digested, "... no-one in France was pleased with the victory.¹²³"

Gaston de Foix himself died at Ravenna, cut down in circumstances which remain unclear. The widely

120. Ibid., cols. 122, 130 and 140.

121. Ibid., cols. 124 and 135.

122. Le Glay, op.cit., p. 496.

123. Lettres, iii, p. 234.

canvassed view that, had Foix lived, the forces of Louis XII would have marched on to capture Rome is at best romantic. Louis had lost too great a proportion of his infantry and the Emperor was soon to recall those land-sknechts who had survived the slaughter. In the aftermath of battle, however, the laments were for those of noble blood who had fallen. Corpses dressed in cloaks of silk and cloth-of-gold littered the field long after the end of the engagement. Once again communal graves were dug - this time in Ravenna, following its capture - to take the dead "... with gold collars". According to one eyewitness, the French themselves said they had lost ten thousand men"and all the nobles¹²⁴"; naturally this was an exaggeration but witness nevertheless to the despair of the moment. However it was the loss of footsoldiers which was crucial and, as it soon transpired, irreplaceable.

Gaston de Foix's heart was removed from the corpse to be sent back to France¹²⁵. The body, in a coffin dressed with gold brocade, made its way to Milan under escort, in the manner of a Roman triumph. The tens of captured enemy banners and the great sword of the papal legate who had been with the Viceroy's army went before it, through Bologna and Reggio¹²⁶. The treatment

124. Diarii, xiv, cols. 123, 143 and 156.

125. Ibid., col. 122.

126. Ibid., cols. 145-7.

accorded the deceased was only appropriate to a man favoured above all others by the King of France. The latter wrote on the 20th. of April, in simple and touching terms, that "... he had lost his nephew and other fine men, which was a grievous thing to him and hard to bear...¹²⁷." Foix's body was placed in the Duomo in Milan, but it did not rest there long. When the Swiss took the city in the summer of 1512 the coffin was smashed up and its covering of cloth-of-gold found its way to Berne, where it was converted into clerical robes. As for the corpse it was abused by Swiss troops, in full view of the French garrison in the castle¹²⁸. Francis I was concerned to provide a fitting memorial for Gaston when he retook Milan in 1515. The body was transferred to the convent of Sta. Marta and a superb sepulchre commissioned from the noted sculptor, Agostino Busti. Daily, divine offices were instituted for the dead man's soul¹²⁹. Busti's monument was never completed however, since Francis ran out of money; its finished pieces were ultimately sold off and scattered throughout Europe, although the impressive effigy remains in Milan, in the castle museum¹³⁰.

127. B.N., Moreau 774, p. 17. The Imperial envoy at Blois thought that "it was impossible that the King could have shown... more grief..." Le Glay, op.cit., p. 497.

128. Kohler, op.cit., p. 389; Letters and papers, p.602.

129. A.N., J. 910, nos. 4-6.

130. G. Clausse, Les tombeaux de Gaston de Foix et de la famille Birago (Paris, 1912), pp. 26-33.

Gaston de Foix was unquestionably a commander of great ability, although even he was finally unable to secure a victory over the Spaniards without great loss - there can be after all no easy successes against powerful enemies. However he remained little more than a commander, for his influence on French policy in Italy appears to have been negligible. No doubt Louis XII saw in Foix's appointment the chance to establish his authority even more firmly in Lombardy. Certainly there is no evidence that Gaston ever disobeyed a royal order - on the contrary he carried out his uncle's commands to the letter, even unto death. In short, Gaston de Foix was a brilliant casualty of events over which he had little control, and this realisation has fostered his image as a tragic hero. Had he lived longer he might have come to exercise greater authority in political affairs, but as it stands Gaston's career tells only of a faithful and able agent of Louis' will. Tragic hero he may have been, but by no definition was he a great man.

APPENDIX

FOUR GASCON CAPTAINS OF THE ORDONNANCE

Gratien d'Aguerre

Gratien d'Aguerre, the third and youngest son of Jean d'Aguerre, a Navarrese knight, was born at Aguerre de Bustince (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) in the early 1440s. After serving with his elder brother, Menaut, in the force sent by Louis XI to help support the Catalan revolt against John II of Aragon, from 1469, Gratien followed Menaut into the pay of the Duke of Lorraine in 1473¹. The brothers distinguished themselves in the service of Lorraine, whose dukes, according to Monluc, "had always favoured the Gascon nation"². Menaut and Gratien took a prominent part in René II's war with Charles the Bold between 1475 and 1477, finally defending Nancy against the Burgundians³. Gratien was rewarded with a number of lordships in Lorraine, and in 1478 he was married to one Madeleine de Castres⁴. The following year Louis XI, ever appreciative of the qualities of a proven soldier, recruited Gratien to French service, with the grant of a

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1. Jaurgain, "profils basques, Menaud et Gratien d'Aguerre", in Revue des Basses-Pyrénées, vol. iv, pp. 1-10 and 140.
 2. Monluc, Commentaires, ed. Courteault, p. 804.
 3. Jaurgain, op.cit., pp. 11-20.
 4. Ibid., pp. 22-3.

company of a hundred lances and the governorship of Mouzon (Ardennes)⁵. In 1481, in line with his move westwards, Gratien's property in Lorraine was exchanged for several possessions in Champagne which were at the disposal of René II, namely the baronies of Rumigny, Yvoi (Ardennes), Aubenton, Martigny and Any (Aisne), and in 1483 Louis XI ceded to him the revenues of Pardiac and Montlezun, part of the confiscated estate of the late Duke of Nemours⁶. The next year Gratien d'Aguerre called himself "chevalier, seigneur de Rumigny, conseiller et chambellan du Roy," when acknowledging the receipt of his royal pension of 1200 livres tournois for 1484⁷. He continued to be based on the northern frontier during the 1480s and early 1490s, serving not only the King of France but also his old master, the Duke of Lorraine. In about 1489 Gratien re-established himself in the duchy when he acquired the lordship of Vienne-le-Châtel (Meuse)⁸. By 1491 his pension stood at 1800 livres and by 1494 at 2000⁹, although his compagnie d'ordonnance was now only fifty lances strong.

It was this company that he led to Italy in 1494,

5. Ibid., p. 31.

6. Ibid., pp. 32 and 37.

7. B.N., Clair.3, no.66.

8. Jaurgain, op.cit., pp. 37-41; B.N., p.o. 13 (dossier Aguerre), nos. 63, 87, 89 and 91.

9. B.N., p.o. 13, no. 8 and fr. 26104, no. 1005.

when in November he landed at Nettuno, in the papal states, as commander of the detachment designated to link up with the Colonna. After participating in the stormy events in Naples and Gaeta following the departure of Charles VIII in 1495, Gratien spent most of the subsequent year in the Abruzzi, of which he had been named governor¹⁰. In the face of the Aragonese counter-offensive Aguerre was obliged to retreat to Gaeta in the latter part of 1496, but after the capitulation of this place he held up at Rocca Guglielma until the cessation of hostilities in April 1497. By early 1498 Gratien was back in France, to resume his duties as governor of Mouzon and guardian of the Champagne border. He was never to return to Italy. In February 1500 he styled himself "baron de Rumigny, seigneur d'Aubenton et Vienne"¹¹. In December 1501 Gratien led his company to a tourney at Blois, held in honour of the Archduke of Austria, and in July 1506 took part in his last campaign, commanding his unit in the force dispatched by Louis XII in aid of the Duke of Guelders¹². But by the 1500s Gratien d'Aguerre appears to have virtually retired as a soldier. By 1517 his pension was down to 1000 livres and his company to thirty lances¹³. He died in the

10. La Pilorgerie, Campagne et bulletins de la grande armée d'Italie, pp. 86-7; Delaborde, L'expédition de Charles VIII, p. 429; Comynnes, Memoirs, ed. Kinser, vol. ii, p. 506; Guicciardini, Storia d'Italia, ed. Panigada, vol. i, p. 221; Jaurgain, op.cit., pp. 51-8.

11. B.N., p.o. 13, no. 23.

12. Jaurgain, op.cit., pp. 136 and 140-1.

13. B.N., fr. 26115, no. 190 and 21510, no. 946.

same year, probably in mid-April, and was buried at Vienne¹⁴. Gratien d'Aguerre produced at least four legitimate offspring from his union with Madeleine de Castres, and was succeeded by his second son, Jean. He also left behind him a considerable reputation: Guicciardini calls him "a courageous and esteemed captain", an anonymous historian of Charles VIII, "a most renowned commander", and lastly Fleuranges', "a Spaniard (sic), a veteran knight and very fine man¹⁵."

14. Ibid., loc.cit.; B.N., fr. 26115, no. 190; B.N., Clair. 3, no. 70; Jaurgain, op.cit., p. 145.

15. Guicciardini, op.cit., i, p. 145; B.N., fr. 17519, fol. 162 vo.; Fleuranges, Histoire des choses mémorables, in Collection des mémoires, ed. Petitot, vol. xvi, p. 154.

Jean d'Astarac-Fontrailles

Jean d'Astarac was the son of Arnaud Guilhem d'Astarac, seigneur de Fontrailles (Hautes-Pyrénées), and Sebille d'Antin¹. Unfortunately other details of his birth and background remain unclear, and he makes his first appearance in our sources only in 1499, when he led a band of foot during the first Milanese campaign. In February the following year we find him at the head of forty men-at-arms operating near Vigevano² and it is probable that by this time he had assumed the lieutenancy of the company of Yves d'Alègre. Certainly he held this post in July 1500, when he was granted 200 ducats a year on confiscated goods in Lombardy for his services³. Fontrailles took part with the Alègre company in the conquest of Naples in 1501 and remained in the south, enjoying a pension of 300 livres on the Neapolitan finances in 1502⁴. Early the next year he acted as one of Bayard's seconds in his duel with the Spanish giant, Sotomayor, in Apulia⁵.

After the loss of Naples Fontrailles soon acquired a company of his own, of thirty lances, which was normally stationed in the Astisan during the middle years of Louis XII's reign⁶. He led this company on the Bologna expedition

1. Anselme, vol. ii, p. 623.

2. Auton, vol. i, pp. 67-8 and 187-90.

3. Pélissier, Documents pour l'histoire de la domination française dans le Milanais, p. 36.

4. B.N., fr. 2930, fol. 17 vo..

5. Le loyal serviteur, Histoire de Bayard, ed. Roman, p.105.

6. B.N., fr. 7882, fols. 2, 83 vo. and 238; Auton, iv, p.162.

of 1506 and the following year to the attack on rebellious Genoa, when he also commanded a troop of 4000 infantry⁷. Fontrailles missed the battle of Agnadello owing to his capture by the Venetians in May 1509 at Treviglio, a town he had been detailed to hold. He was imprisoned in the Palace at Venice and not released until early in the following year. Whilst a captive his company was raised to a strength of forty lances⁸. From 1510 he is continually prominent on campaign in Italy and he held command of sizeable formations of troops⁹. Between 1510 and 1512 Fontrailles enjoyed a pension of 1200 livres per annum on the Milanese treasury¹⁰. After participating in the battle of Ravenna his company is next mentioned as stationed in the castle of Milan in July 1512¹¹, but there is no certain evidence that Fontrailles himself was here, nor indeed is there any further reference to his unit being involved in the defence of the place. In 1513 Fontrailles was given command of all Louis XII's light horse and ordered to Picardy, in face of the English threat to the northern frontier. In August he successfully re-supplied Théroutanne¹². Soon afterwards his company was raised to a strength of fifty lances¹³, but by 1515 it disappears from the records and it seems probable that Fontrailles himself was dead by about this date. He had

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-1 and 198; Fleuranges, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

8. B.N., fr. 21507, no. 799.

9. *Diarii*, vol. x, cols. 548 and 846.

10. A.N., J. 910, nos. 1-2 bis.

11. *Diarii*, xiv, cols. 172-4; *Letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII*, ed. Brodie and Brewer, vol. i, pt. I, p. 598.

12. B.N., n.a.fr. 7648, fols. 34 and 38; M. du Bellay, *Mémoires*, ed. V-L. Bourilly and F. Vindry, S.H.F., vo. i (Paris, 1908), pp. 29-32.

13. B.N., fr. 2928, fol. 10.

married, at the instigation of Louis XII, a rich heiress, Catherine de Marestang, daughter of the Baron of Castillon, by whom he had his son and heir, Jacques¹⁴. Fontrailles was a favourite of the King, described by a Florentine envoy in 1509 as "a man of quality and beloved of His Majesty"¹⁵. The Venetians were delighted at his capture, calling him "a man of great sort, on land and sea" and "better and more esteemed than any other in the French army"¹⁶. He was remembered for his popularity with Louis XII, his valiant nature, and particularly for his command of the King's light cavalry (mainly Albanians), to which he was appointed as early as 1499, according to one authority¹⁷.

14. Anselme, ii, p. 623.

15. Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations de la France avec la Toscane, vol. ii, p. 318.

16. Diarii, viii, cols. 237 and 239.

17. Brantôme, Oeuvres complètes, vol. iii, p. 132; Monluc, op. cit., p. 601; L. Susane, Histoire de la cavalerie française, vol. i (Paris, 1874), p. 42.

Roger, baron de Béarn

Roger de Béarn was born in about 1470, the illegitimate son of Jean de Béarn, seigneur de Gerderest (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), executed by the Queen of Navarre in 1488, and grandson of Bernard, the bastard of Jean I, comte de Foix¹. From an early age Roger entered the service of his cousin, Jean de Foix-Narbonne: by 1491 he had become bailli and captain of the latter's town of Etampes (a post which he was to retain until almost the end of his life)², and a man-at-arms in the Foix company. However he also maintained links with the land of his birth, through possession of the lordship of Labastide-Villefranche (Pyrénées-Atlantiques) and other Béarnese territories, which his half-brother, Bertrand, seigneur de Gerderest, had granted him by 1497³. It was/perhaps as a vassal of the sovereigns of Béarn, Kings of Navarre, that Roger attended the coronation of Jean d'Albret and Catherine de Foix at Pamplona in 1494⁴. But he was to make his career in French service and by 1497 had become lieutenant of the Foix company, when in April he was stationed with the unit at Asti⁵. In 1499 he led the

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1. Anselme, vol. iii, pp. 392-3;; B.N., Cabinet d'Hozier 32 (dossier Béarn), p. 2; Antony and Courteault, Les testaments des derniers rois de Navarre, p. 41, n. 3; Dictionnaire de biographie française, vol. v.
 2. G.R., no. 12364.
 3. B.P., E. 326 and 547.
 4. Catálogo del archivo general de Navarra, vol. 1, publ. by F. Idoate (Pamplona, 1970), no. 1295.
 5. Diarii, vol. i, col. 583.

company during the first Milanese campaign, where the unit distinguished itself at the siege of Alessandria⁶. By his will of October 1500 Jean de Foix-Narbonne bequeathed to Roger the lordship of Aspet (Haute-Garonne) or, failing this, that of Auterive (Haute-Garonne)⁷. After Jean's death in the following month Roger became the effective captain of the Foix company, owing to the extreme youth of Jean's heir, Gaston, and it appears that he enjoyed the captain's salary for the next nine years at least⁸. The remainder of Roger's career was to be dominated by service in Italy, although he did hold administrative posts in France. He was vicomte and receveur ordinaire of Orbec (Calvados) between 1498 and 1502 at least, although he had relinquished this office by 1506⁹. In 1510 he became captain and governor of Mauléon-Soule (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), having first been lieutenant; the viscounty of Soule, a French enclave in Béarn, had, it seems, been held by Jean de Foix-Narbonne. Roger was to retain this post from 1510 until his death, when it passed to his brother, Menaut¹⁰.

6. Auton, vol. i, pp. 40 and 59.

7. Boucher de Molandon, Le testament de Jean... de Foix, p. 35.

8. B.N., p.o. 237 (dossier Béarn), nos. 32-3.

9. G.R., nos. 12718 and 12797.

10. Ibid., nos. 13972-3 bis; B.N., fr. 26111, no. 937; B.N., n.a. fr. 1462, no. 198; Jaurgain, "Les capitaines châtelains de Mauléon, gouverneurs de la vicomté de Soule", in Revue de Béarn, Navarre et Lannes, vol. ii, pp. 251-3.

Roger de Béarn's appetite for Italian adventure is attested by Jean d'Auton's note that he was one of those who hurried from Lyons to Mortara in early 1500 to take part in the final battle with Sforza¹¹. In later 1503 he led the Foix company to the Garigliano, where he distinguished himself in action before returning north the following January¹². By 1505 he had been made governor of Trezzo, a town a few miles east of Milan¹³; this was an office he would retain for life, as long as the French held Lombardy. After leading the Foix company on the Bologna expedition in 1506, Roger next took part in the reduction of Genoa the following year¹⁴. After service during the Agnadello campaign, he led part of the Foix company to the siege of Padua in later 1509¹⁵ and indeed seems to have spent the next few years campaigning in Italy almost continuously. By 1508-9 his French pension stood at 600 livres tournois, a sum apparently reduced to 500 livres by 1510, but in this year Roger also enjoyed 1000 livres on the finances of Milan and would continue to do so until 1512¹⁶. He was prominent at the battle

11. Auton, i, pp. 238-40.

12. Diarii, v, col. 786.

13. B.N., fr. 7882, fol. 130 vo..

14. Auton, iv, pp. 70-1 and 196-7.

15. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 149.

16. B.N., fr. 23268, fol. 34 and A.N., J. 910, nos. 1-2 bis..

of Ravenna and during the French retreat from Lombardy in June 1512 he held up at Trezzo fortress, which he managed to defend successfully until January 1513, before yielding to superior force and retiring to France. Roger was soon back in Italy, serving at the battle of Novara in June 1513 at the head of the one hundred lance-strong former Foix company, which he had inherited on the death of Gaston de Foix¹⁷. After the retreat from Lombardy we find Béarn and his company in the north later in the same year, and he took part in the battle of the Spurs, where he was erroneously reported killed¹⁸. In September 1515 Roger led his company against the Swiss at Marignano and was handsomely rewarded by Francis I for his efforts, with both cash and the office of seneschal of Valentinois-Diois¹⁹. In 1516 he still enjoyed 1000 livres on the Milanese treasury and this had been doubled by the following year, when in addition he received a French pension of 1000 livres²⁰. By 1517 however his company had been reduced to fifty lances²¹. Roger de Béarn died in early 1518, apparently in late January and probably at Trezzo²², and was succeeded by his bastard brother, Menaut. He was a widely respected soldier, described by Bayard's biographer as "an adventurous knight, always ready for the skirmish," and by Fleuranges as "a kind companion"²³.

17. B.N., Clair. 2, p. 8 bis..

18. Le Bellay, op.cit., i, pp. 29-32; Diarii, xvii, cols. 32-3.

19. B.N., n.a.fr. 8616, no. 6; B.N., fr. 21509, no. 901; B.N., Clair. 120, no. 43.

20. A.N., J. 910, nos. 4-5.

21. B.N., p.o. 237, no. 17.

22. B.N., fr. 21510, no. 961; B.N., Clair. 182, no. 112 and Clair. 244, no. 801; Diarii, xxv, col. 209.

23. Loyal serviteur, op.cit., p. 306 and Fleuranges, op.cit., p. 166.

Jean de Durfort-Duras

Jean de Durfort was probably born in about 1460, in England, the son of Gailhard IV, seigneur de Duras (Lot-et-Garonne), Blanquefort and Villandraut (Gironde), and of Anne of Suffolk, daughter of the Duke of Suffolk. The house of Duras was one of the most illustrious of those of the Bordelais and Agenais, but Gailhard, latterly a partisan of the English in Guienne, had been exiled from France in 1453 and deprived of his French possessions. Afterwards he distinguished himself in English and later Burgundian service but he had to wait until 1476 before he was reinstated in his former territories by Louis XI¹. In December 1478 Gailhard married his son, Jean, to Jeanne Angevin, grand-daughter of a former notary from Bordeaux, Bernard Angevin, and heiress of Jacques Angevin, seigneur de Rauzan, Civrac and Pujols (Gironde). Jeanne brought for her dowry Thil, Tiran and Bussac (Gironde) and the marriage helped to bolster the finances of the Duras family². Jean succeeded to the Duras inheritance upon the death of his father in 1487 and by 1489 was in receipt of a royal pension of 800 livres tournois. By this date also he styled himself "seigneur de Duras, chevalier, conseiller et chambellan du Roy³." In January

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1. Anselme, vol. v, pp. 733-4; Favre, Précis historique sur la famille de Durfort-Duras, pp. 49-50; B.N., dossiers bleus 244 (dossier Durfort), fols. 104-5; Boutruche, La crise d'une société, seigneurs et paysans du Bordelais pendant la guerre de Cent ans, pp. 357 and 414-5.
 2. Anselme, p. 734; B.N., dossiers bleus 244, fol. 70; Boutruche, op.cit., pp. 357 and 374; Boutruche, Une société provinciale en lutte contre le régime féodal, p. 104.
 3. B.N., p.o. 1043 (dossier Durfort), no. 45.

1494 Jean attended the coronation of the Kings of Navarre at Pamplona⁴.

It is claimed that soon afterwards Duras took part in Charles VIII's expedition to Naples and that in 1499 he was involved in the conquest of Lombardy⁵, but contemporary reference to his participation in these early campaigns appears to be wanting. His career during this period is not entirely unknown to us, however, since in late 1497 Duras appears as an ambassador to England - a role for which his background made him particularly suited of course - and he was described by a Venetian envoy in London as "a man of considerable standing⁶." In July 1502 Duras formed part of the escort of Anne de Foix, Queen of Hungary, when she travelled through Lombardy to Venice on her way to assume her crown⁷. Soon afterwards Duras became lieutenant of the Albret company, which he led to the Garigliano in later 1503, before returning to Genoa in January 1504⁸. Later he led this unit on the expedition to Bologna in 1506 and to the attack on Genoa the following year, although in April 1507

4. Catálogo del archivo general de Navarra, vol. 1, no. 1295.

5. Anselme, loc.cit.; Favre, op.cit., p. 50; B.N. dossiers bleus 244, fol. 105 vo.; B.N., cabinet d'Hozier 125 (dossiers Durfort), fol. 31.

6. Diarii, vol. i, col. 826.

7. Auton, vol. ii, p. 245.

8. B. Senerega, De rebus genuensibus commentaria, ed. E. Pandiani, in L.A. Muratori, Rerum italicarum scriptores, vol. xxiv, pt. 8, p. 94, n.3; Diarii, v, col. 786.

he had also been commissioned to levy troops in Switzerland for the same operation⁹. By 1509 Duras was captain of the former Albret company¹⁰ and he probably led the unit to the battle of Agnadello. Some little time later he was appointed governor of Crema in Lombardy. By the year 1510 Duras enjoyed a pension of 2000 livres on the Milanese treasury (as well as 300 livres in France), a gratuity which he would retain until 1512¹¹. As is suggested by his large Milanese pension, Duras was based in Lombardy during these years and he finally sustained a siege at Crema in the summer of 1512, yielding the place to the Venetians in September and retreating to France. He was described by a Venetian official at this time as about 53 years old and "a man of great sort"¹². In 1513 Duras married again, Jeanne Angevin having died sometime before 1504: his second wife was Catherine de Foix, widow of the lord of Montbardon and daughter of Corbeyran II de Foix, seigneur de Rabat¹³. By 1514 Duras enjoyed a pension of 2000 livres and in the following year he again undertook a diplomatic mission to England¹⁴. He probably led his company to the reconquest of Milan later in the year. By 1517 his compagnie d'ordonnance had been reduced from

9. Auton, iv, pp. 71, 161 and 157.

10. B.N., Clair. 158, no. 80.

11. A.N., J. 910, nos. 1-2 bis..

12. Diarii, xv, col. 83.

13. Anselme, v, pp. 734-5.

14. B.N., Clair. 2, p. 153; Canestrini and Desjardins, Négociations diplomatiques, vol. ii, p. 694.

fifty to thirty lances¹⁵. He died in 1520, was buried at Duras, and was succeeded by his second son, François, one of some eight children of Jean's marriage with Jeanne Angevin¹⁶.

15. B.N., n.a.fr. 1481, no.73.

16. Anselme, p. 734; B.N., dossiers bleus 244, fol. 71; Favre, op.cit., p. 53; Lauzun, "Le château de Duras", in Revue de l'Agenais, vol. xxxviii, p. 171.

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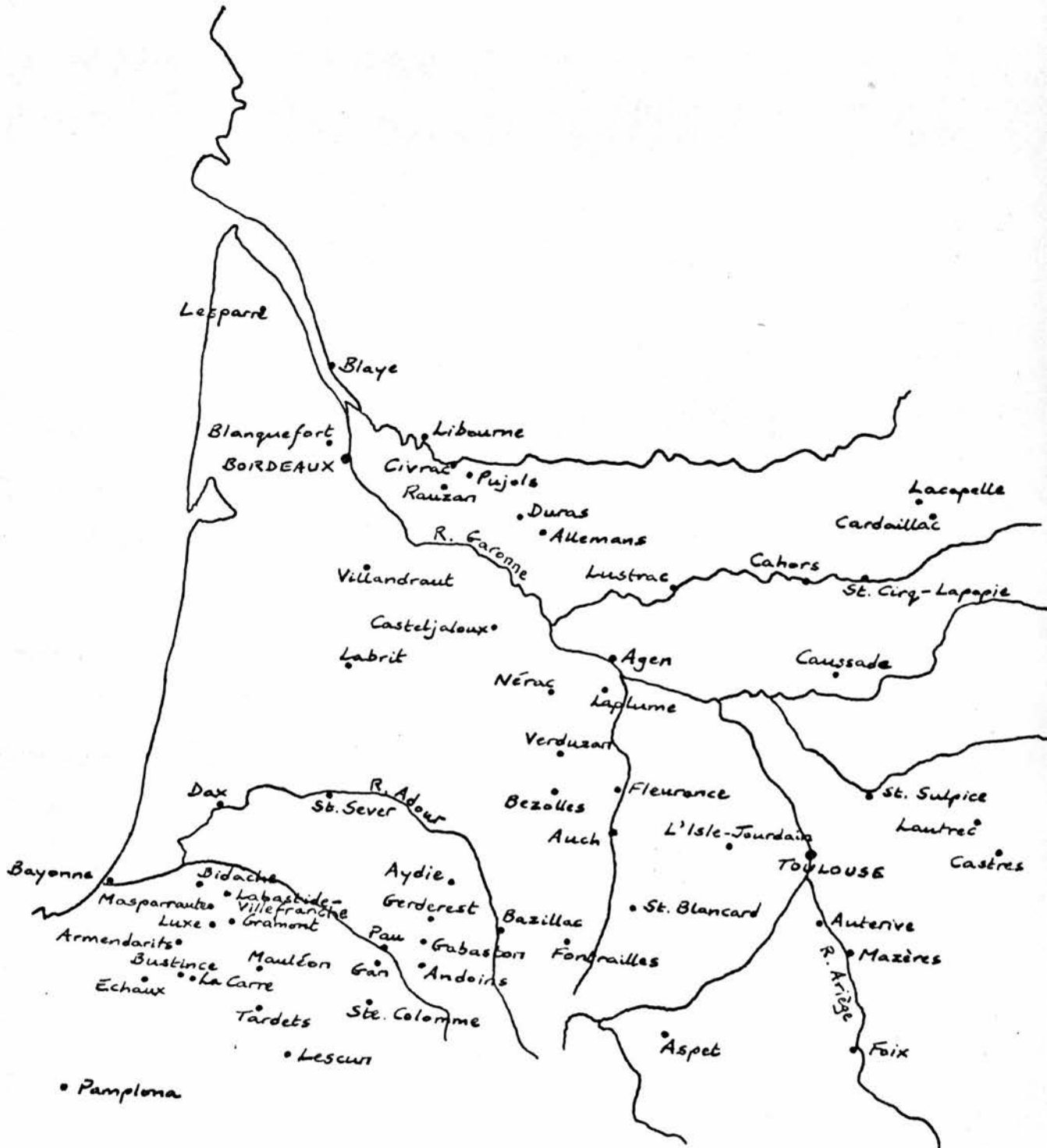
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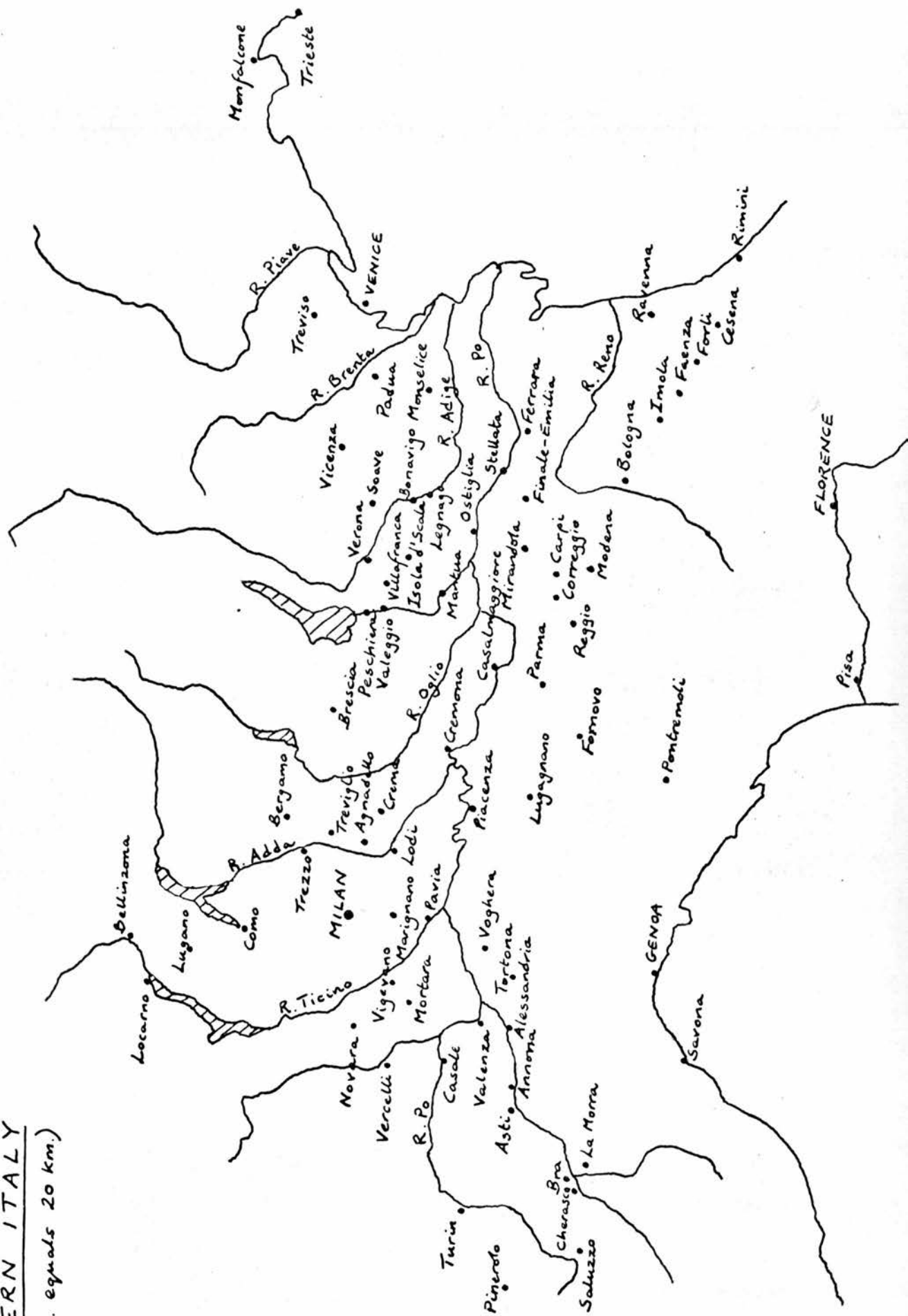
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SOUTH-WEST FRANCE

(1 cm. equals 20 km.)



(1 cm. equals 20 km.)



SOUTHERN ITALY

(1 cm. equals 20 km)

